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first
HEARTS FOREVER:

OR,

THE OLD DOMINION BATTLE-GROUNDS.

A TALE OF 1782.

BY N. C. IRON,

AUTHOR OF THE FOLLOWING DIME NOVELS:

342 STELLA, THE SPY.
463 THE TWO GUARDS.

497 THE UNKNOWN.
503 THE DOUBLE HERO.

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HEARTS FOREVER.

CHAPTER I.

THE HIDDEN TREASURE.

THE early part of the Nothern Campaign of 1781 was favorable to the British. Cornwallis had marched from Charleston to Virginia, where he ravaged the country with cavalry mounted upon the stolen horses of the planters. There was no adequate force to confront him. The Continentals were hatless, shoeless, in the rags of mendicants, and with little food. Their leaders, however, were indomitable men, and under their example their followers preserved the gallantry of soldiers. But, they were still unequal to their enemy. At this juncture there was a *Southern* cry for Washington—that great spirit of the war—and as soon as possible the General, accompanied by Rochambeau and some French troops, marched from the Highlands into Virginia, when Cornwallis retired to Yorktown, which he fortified.

While these movements were in progress, a man was perceived advancing through one of those numerous forests that were then in the vicinity of Yorktown. He was tall, robust and of the middle age. He carried a lighted lantern, a mattock and a spade. It was midnight, and a night of terror. The mighty powers of Nature seemed uncontrolled. A tempest of the most fearful description raged. The wind rushed through the forest, tearing up trees in its frightful sportiveness that seemed too massive to be even shaken by such an unseen element, while the continual descent of lightning exhibited the destruction that was going on. Peals of thunder contributed additional awe to the terrible chorus, and the ground was inundated by the torrents of rain. Every living creature that revels in the night remained appalled and sheltered in its covert.

One man alone seemed unaffected by this scene—he who

was abroad with the lantern. Some absorbing, controlling impulse moved him, for he pursued his path in the blindness of habit rather than by the direction of his eye; and, as he bore the implements of the grave upon his shoulders, it might have been conjectured that he was proceeding to hide some victim in the earth. But he had no such iniquity to conceal; nor was he a man of crime; his mission simply demanded secrecy; and he walked thus incautiously, looking neither to the right nor to the left, because he imagined that the night was too fearful for any other wanderer than himself to be abroad.

At length this midnight pilgrim paused at the foot of a gigantic oak, more noble than its forest brethren; then he cast down his burthen, exclaiming:

“Here we are, all safe and sound!”

He at once set about his work. The lightning had not abated; its incessant flashes so illumined the forest that he was enabled to examine every tree and avenue that surrounded the lordly oak. Satisfied that he had nothing to fear from the observation of any midnight prowler, he prepared for his task, and commenced to remove the turf at a point apparently well understood near the tree. When he had cleared a space as large as the surface of an ordinary grave, he paused as he muttered:

“Three years ago, in 1778, I first dug this grave, and buried here the care of a whole life. It was too precious to be above ground, and is so still. If freedom comes without the loss of my gold, I welcome it to my heart; but, if this liberty is to be purchased with my treasure, and I am to enjoy this luxury in poverty, why I prefer to keep my gold, and live happily under such government as may be.”

Smiling at his own conceit, he labored on, throwing out the soft soil until his form entirely disappeared beneath the surface. Then the spade soon ceased to fling forth the dirt. A pause ensued, and the man lifted high above his head an iron pot.

“I have found you!” he exclaimed, “I see you again. I greet you with all my heart.”

It was his long-buried treasure that he thus welcomed concealed not only from the foe, but denied his bleeding country, whose ragged, shoeless, half-fed soldiers were fighting for his weal. He stood up in his little recess, feasting

his eyes upon the glittering gold. But this joy was of short duration. A neighboring tree, reeling under a sudden blast, came crashing down to the earth, falling exactly over the grave which contained the treasure and its claimant, and covering it from end to end. A shriek, as if it were a human death-cry, rung through the wood, and then all was in profound silence. It was an appalling moment. The quietude, however, was soon broken by the smothered voice heard from the covered grave.

"Ha! ha! A good joke, by my soul!" and he burst forth in a song:

"A capital joke, by my soul!
Heart of oak is down on his face,
But the lightnings may dash
The trees down with a crash,
And the grave is a jolly good place!
Ha! ha! ha!"

Soon the spade did the work of deliverance, and the man crawled forth, much exhausted with his severe labor.

"No use to try to lug them pots out of this, to-night. I ain't equal to the task. But all is safe—now safer than ever, for old heart of oak is service-keeper now, and no hand can roll him away. That's it, by the witches! I'll just fix the pots again, and put 'em to sleep until another night, when sharp eyes are all blinded by the lightning."

Down into the hole he slipped, for a few moments. Then he came forth again, and proceeded, with rapid strokes, to fill up the excavation. It was an arduous task, but was at length accomplished, and although the surface still bore the appearance of recently-disturbed earth, yet there was nothing but what might very reasonably be attributed to the fall of the tree.

By the time these operations were concluded, day was breaking in the east. The man became alarmed at the lateness of the hour, for to be seen to quit the wood at the dawn, was to excite suspicion. He therefore gathered hastily his mattock, spade, and battered lantern, and departed; but, despite his anxiety to be gone, he twice returned to place an additional sod upon the portal of his treasury, although he had first covered it too carefully for improvement.

When the gold-hider had retreated far into the woods, a

man was seen to descend from the noble oak, beneath whose branches the miser had made his grave. He was master of the secret that fifty thousand dollars in coin lay buried beneath his feet.

CHAPTER II.

THE REFUGEE.

It was at the close of a Virginian day, that an elderly man and a youthful girl stepped from the piazza of a tasteful residence into a garden which surrounded it, that they might enjoy more fully the sweets with which the magnolia, the clematis, the roses, and other fragrant dwellers of the garden, perfumed the air. These were father and daughter—Louis and Adeline Beaumont. There was benevolence in the parent's face, and great beauty in the girl's.

The estate of Mr. Beaumont was small, but compact and fertile, though its position was most perilous. It was almost surrounded by the British army; and, although it had escaped the merciless ravages of the unscrupulous Tarleton, who, in his capricious lenity, had revoked an order for the pillage of the house and property, because of the beauty of its heiress, it was still exposed to the marauding visits of the army of Cornwallis. Through a trusty slave, however, Mr. Beaumont had received information that Washington had reached Virginia, and that Cornwallis had retired to Yorktown, which he was strongly fortifying. This intelligence had contributed greater joy to the pleasures of that evening. But there was another source of delight in the slave's information, for he had learned that the dauntless regiment in which the only son of Mr. Beaumont held a captaincy, and which had been quartered in the Highlands of the Hudson, had arrived with Washington.

"Then we shall soon see Randolph again," said the father to the daughter, as they pursued their path down the garden, the former communicating the welcome news which the slave had obtained; "he will not long be absent from his home. Although the intelligence has not been ten minutes in the

house, I find that old Dinah has heated the oven for the purpose of preparing those things that Randolph used to regard as a special treat. I feel, sweet Adeline, the richest man in all our neighborhood, in that I have contributed one-half my treasure to the cause of liberty and my country; and, although I have retained the other half myself, and that half is dear to me, it is a moiety that has no martial excellence, and of which no one yet knows the worth but he to whom it appertains."

"But, the absent half, dear father," replied Adeline, "has repaid you ample interest. Your investment has been far from fruitless, for the glory that our beloved Randolph has won has ennobled our name, and made you a far richer parent than when he first buckled on the sword. I am the profitless half."

"Profitless, my love," exclaimed her father, pressing his daughter's arm to his heart, as they strolled through the garden. "You are the half-treasure in which I live; the other half I have devoted to God and to my country."

A pause followed this solemn declaration, when the fair Adeline, fearing that her observation had afforded her father pain, said:

"Forgive me, dear father, I but—"

"There is nothing to forgive—not a word to pardon," replied the father; "but let us banish the subject, and as one step toward digression, we will question Carlos, who is approaching us, doubtless with some important suggestion in reference to the manner in which Randolph should be received. Well, Carlos," he continued, addressing the slave "are you seeking us?"

"No, massa," replied the slave, with so much nonchalance that one unaccustomed to his bearing might imagine that he was perfectly indifferent upon the subject he was preparing to introduce. "Oh, my, dat ole nigger, Dinah, don't let de pies go into de oven till dey be all made. It's heated de oven till it's pantin' for 'em. Trute is, nottin' 'ill be done wnen Massa Randolph comes home. Pretty 'ception he'll git! Jus' you in'fere, Miss Ad'lin', and not let dat kantankerous ole 'oman have her way?"

"No, no, good Carlos," replied Adeline, with a smile, "I can not undertake to rebuke Dinah in this case. She is

mistress of the kitchen, and you must learn to tolerate her peculiarities. She is already, on the first whisper of my brother Randolph's coming, endeavoring to welcome him in a manner that will please him most. Ought I, while she is thus entitled to my gratitude, repay her with reproach?"

"Dem fine feelin's no good to dat ole cook, Miss Ad'lin'," replied the imperturbable Carlos. "They on'y 'courage her in obst'acy. Dat 'oman laugh at me, 'cause she *know* Miss Ad'lin' hab such fine feelin'. Dat ole Sukey, imitatin' Dinah, 'gan to clean rooms and brush about for Massa Randolph. What right 'oman like dat do dat 'out orders? Dey better sot up for misses, dey so comp'tent. Fine pass, dis, w'en ole wenches put on *sich* airs!"

"But, Carlos," interposed Mr. Beaumont, "we are indebted to you for this bustle and preparation. You indirectly gave those orders. It was through your faithful efforts we have obtained the cheering information that the regiment of my son had crossed the Potomac. It was these joyous tidings that set us all struggling to receive, with suitable hospitality, my long absent Randolph. But for your bold and hazardous adventure, we should have remained ignorant of the happiness approaching us."

The white teeth of Carlos were conspicuously visible as he grinned in triumph at this tribute of his master, and, with significance and satisfaction, he remarked:

"I know dat, massa, and Dinah and Sukey know dat, too," and then walked away.

"Our slaves are like children," remarked Adeline, "who are continually requiring lessons of instruction, and then profit but little from them."

"Petty dissensions are not confined to the kitchen nor to slaves," replied Mr. Beaumont, "for the parlor is not free from its testy moments. If we were more exemplary in our conduct, our precepts would be more forcible. These people are more apt to imitate our errors than follow our advice. Now that I reflect, even those words which I have just addressed to faithful Carlos may be so misconstrued that the fire of anger already kindled in the kitchen may be fanned into a flame; yet I did this noble black but simple justice, for he was three days absent in seeking the information which he

knew would warm our hearts; and, during that period, he had no house to shelter him, nor other food than what he found in the fields which Tarleton and Cornwallis have so lately ravaged.

"He is a noble slave, dear father," remarked Adeline; "if we gain the liberty for which we are now fighting, will he not be also free?"

"That is not the design of this great war, my love," replied Mr. Beaumont. "We are struggling for national distinction; to cast off the fetters of the Colonist and acquire the right of governing ourselves; that we, as a nation, may be free from the oppression and tyranny of England. But when we have won this coveted boon by years of battle and of suffering, I do not see how we, a great and free people, can retain our slaves in bondage upon any principle of right. It is folly to maintain that the African race are inferior in humane attributes to the white people of the world. If we believe in the theory of creation, that Eve and Adam were the parents of mankind, then black and white children are equally their descendants, color being merely dependent on climatic influences. The perceptive faculties of Carlos are as perfect as my own, exemplified not only in the three days' scout in which he discovered the approach of Randolph, but in the able manner in which he has more than once preserved us and our property from the common ruin.

"I regard Carlos more as a friend than as a slave," said Adeline; "but he has been with us very long, dear father."

"Since you were two years of age and he was twelve, which is now seventeen," replied Mr. Beaumont. "I bought him in traveling, more from sympathy than any want of such an addition to my household. He was threatened with a severe flogging from a brutal master, and I redeemed him from the penalty. For some time he was sullen and perverse; but habitual good treatment softened his heart, and he became willing and obedient. Twice have I presented him with his free papers, and twice has he cast them in the fire. Each time he has asked me how he can of right demand to be with me except he be my slave, and I can give no reply that will satisfy his devotion. But, hark, who can it be that rides so rapidly along the road leading to our house? Our

view is obscured by yonder trees. Hear the horse's hoofs upon the ground? Surely no one would approach at that headlong pace, except one who sought his old home or a place of safety."

"*Can it be Randolph?*" exclaimed Adeline, and father and daughter stood most anxiously watching the spot where the horseman might be expected to appear. Their walk had extended to a lawn below the garden which conducted to more extensive grounds, and those grounds were separated from the private road that conducted to the house by a hedge, not very lofty, but, from its prickly character, was a formidable barrier against encroachment. The horseman soon came into view. He was advancing at a speed fearful to behold, and yet urged his noble animal to something beyond its power. It was not Randolph. The uniform which he wore was not that of the Continentals, but he was an officer, and when he perceived Mr. Beaumont and his daughter, he quitted the road, leaped, the hedge, and dashing up to them, dismounted in an instant. He was young, and of gentlemanly bearing. He raised his cap, and then, addressing Mr. Beaumont, said:

"Sir, may I ask refuge for a few hours. A troop of the enemy's horse are at my heels, and my animal can carry me no further. Life or death is in your answer."

"You have come, sir, to the den of the wolf for succor," replied Mr. Beaumont. "Those whom you call the enemy are my friends and countrymen, and may be led, for aught I know, by my own son. Your ravages have made desolate this portion of the land, and while thousands of starving widows, and fatherless and motherless children are crying aloud for vengeance on your head, shall I mock their prayers by favoring your appeal for mercy? If, then, as you say, life or death hangs on my decision, you must die, for I can not, dare not, *will not* succor you."

The soldier drew himself up to his full height, and surveyed Mr. Beaumont with great sternness. Feelings of pride seemed to have chased from his mind all apprehension for his safety. He bowed stiffly, and replied:

"No doubt, sir, great enormities have been practised in this locality by our troops; but, when I perceived *your* house and grounds uninjured, and that you and your fair daughter

had escaped what you describe as the general pillage, I hoped to receive that measure of kindness which had been afforded you, and therefore threw myself upon your mercy. I have your answer, and am content to abide by your judgment. You shall have the additional gratification of seeing me slaughtered, sir, but not without ample vengeance." He approached his foaming steed, took from his holsters a brace of pistols, and, after examining minutely into their efficiency, he continued: "My hand is steady and my pistols good. I can insure a victim to each weapon, and perhaps another to my sword. The troopers will soon be here. I practised a *ruse* upon them which has succeeded; but, they have a good scent for human blood, and will regain the trail, while I have lost the whole of my advantage by this vain parley."

Mr. Beaumont felt keenly the reproach of this brave man, and while he watched him in astonishment, almost relented that he had denied him the shelter that he craved. Adeline, who had regarded the scene in speechless horror, now threw herself upon one knee before her father, and exclaimed:

"Father, remember that Randolph is a soldier—that an hour may arrive when he may ask for mercy from his enemies. Shall, we then, allow it to be said, while those enemies pierce his heart, 'Your father was deaf to the entreaties of our brother, so we are deaf to you—your father shall no longer have a son!'"

The whole frame of the father was in agitation at these impressive words. He extended his unsteady hands to his beloved daughter to raise her from the earth, while the officer, deeply affected by her exquisite appeal, and, gallant even in his peril, advanced to assist her in regaining her position; but, before a word was uttered by the father, a dark hand was laid upon that of Mr. Beaumont, and Carlos, who had been a silent witness to much that had passed, said:

"Massa, dat ofser sabe my life, few days go."

"Then he, too, shall be saved!" exclaimed the planter "He who is merciful merits mercy. Carlos, devise some method of preserving this officer. Hark! the troopers are upon the road! I hear the clatter of their horses. Quick, boy, quick! a gallant soldier's life is in your hands." Approaching the fugitive he added, "your pardon, sir, and—"

"No apology," replied the officer, grasping Mr. Beaumont's hand. "I owe you nothing but gratitude." Then, addressing Adeline, he continued: "Lady, I thank you from the bottom of my heart for the great service that you have rendered me to-day. Life preserved by you receives an additional grace, and my heart never acknowledged so fair a creditor. I know not whether I shall be able to escape, for my pursuers are numerous, but should your gallant brother ever be so unfortunate as to require an English friend, he may command, to the extent of his life, the services of Major Knowlton. In the mean time, that this incident may not be forgotten, allow me to fasten upon your wrist a bracelet of my mother's, who will be proud to learn that it is worn by one who asked the life of her son with bended knee." The major pushed his hand to an inner pocket of his military jacket, and, withdrawing the jeweled bracelet, placed it upon the arm of the almost unconscious Adeline.

Carlos was impatiently awaiting the major at a short distance, with another horse.

"Come, massa officer," he said, "time to be off. Now, 'tend to my 'rections. Mount dis hoss, ride ober dem fields, down dat holler, up dat hill, in dat 'ood; den foller a narrer path, but, afore you come to de fust turn, pull de hoss's bridle, and he'll turn into de hazel bush, and dere he'll stand as quiet as a lamb. W'en de troopers be passed, and dere is no sound, den come back here, and you'll be safe."

Just as the major had mounted and gained the shelter of some trees, the troopers came in view, and a simultaneous cry broke from them as they recognized the horse. They, too, leaped the hedge, and the leader of the men was soon in conversation with Carlos, whom they found minutely scrutinizing the still-panting horse.

"Where's the rider of that horse?" exclaimed the leader, fiercely.

"Him stole *my* hoss, massa," replied Carlos in noisy anger, "and left me dis worn-out t'ing. Mine de best in 'ginia. What will I do? What will I do?"

"Fool!" cried the enraged trooper, "which way did he go?"

"Good massa, will you get back my hoss?" asked Carlos, to afford the fugitive a little time.

"Scoundrel!" cried the enraged pursuer, "no trifling with me," and he withdrew a pistol from his holster and presented it at poor Carlos. The black knew the stern character of these riders, and that death soon followed upon their merciless threats. He, therefore, affected to be overcome with terror.

"Him gon' by dem trees, massa," said Carlos, in pretended tremor, "and he's in dat holler 'yond dem. He'll soon ris' de hill. Stop, massa soger, till you see him, and den, if nigger don't spoke true, shoot him."

The trooper, believing that he had terrified the negro into truth, made no reply, but seemed quietly to accept the alternative, still poising his pistol in his hand. He maintained a watchful eye upon the hill where the fugitive was expected to reappear, and cast furtive glances upon the negro and the major's abandoned charger. Then, as a thought suddenly occurred to his mind as to the usefulness of additional weapons in the chase, he exclaimed to the negro in a voice of thunder:

"Bring me the pistols from the coward's holsters."

"Dem gone," said the black, displaying the empty cases; but, availing himself of the opportunity to glide upon the defensive side of the poor animal, thus to place a barrier between himself and danger. Then, to divert the trooper from his gathering rage, he exclaimed in the almost frantic boisterousness so common to his race:

"Dere him be! dere him be! massa ofser; him makin' for de 'ood, jest where de path lead t'rew. Ride, sogers, and I'll foller ye and git my hoss, de bes' hoss in 'ginia."

The *ruse* of the artful black succeeded. The major was in full view, hastening toward the wood. A yell arose from the troopers as they put spurs to their horses, and started on the exciting race.

The whole of this exciting scene, from the arrival of the major to the departure of the troopers, had passed in a few minutes. Father and daughter stood side by side, and almost hidden from the troopers by the foliage. Though they were disregarded by the warlike pursuers, they heard all that transpired. Their anxiety was intense; and when the troopers entered the wood, Mr. Beaumont and his daughter turned their steps toward the house, while Carlos led the jaded horse

of the major to the stable, and awaited with some anxiety the sequel of his scheme.

Two hours later in the night two persons stood at the library-door of the mansion. An almost noiseless sign caused the door to be instantly opened, and the men entered. Mr. Beaumont and his daughter were in the room. The visitors were Carlos and the British officer. The latter advanced toward Adeline and her father, and, taking a hand of each, he said, with deep pathos:

“My feelings are in my heart, I can not speak them.” Then, turning toward Adeline, he added: “To be rescued from death by you, fair lady, is the sweetest peril of life.” He then pressed her fair hand to his cold and livid lips, and as he did so he perceived the bracelet still on her arm. Their eyes met for a moment; but they were both obscured with tears.

“How unfrequently do the consequences of our crimes and virtues recoil upon ourselves,” said Mr. Beaumont. “This worthy soldier, who, a few days since, preserved the life of Carlos, has received his measure of recompense in his service of to-day. Although war is terrible, there is a mercy in some of its incidents that make us consider even our enemies with feelings of admiration.”

CHAPTER III.

THE BENIGHTED SOLDIER.

It was on that night when the miser sought his treasure that a soldier of the Continental service rode through another section of the forest. His horse was on the walk—indeed, it seemed unequal to a faster pace; and the rider, enveloped in an ample cloak to defend himself against the impetuosity of the rain, appeared almost as jaded as the animal. He had lost his way and was benighted, and the pitiless storm, that was then raging, had embittered his situation. He had cast the bridle-rein upon his horse's neck, affording him full liberty to take what course he pleased, trusting that the instinct of the hungry animal would be more successful in finding an asylum than his master's reason. But, all was inhospitable

The wilderness seemed homeless, and each flash of lightning only revealed the unmitigated hopelessness of his position. The jaded horse, however, unmoved by the flashing lightning, the pealing thunder, or the incessant rain, moved steadily forward, though left to his own discretion, as if he sought a stable and its cheer, and entertained a notion that such a desideratum could not be attained by standing still.

“Had I admitted that there are persons wiser than myself,” said the horseman, still looking intently, as the lightning gave extent to his view, in the hope of espying some distant chimney, “and listened to sound advice, I should not have been in this predicament. I could, with satisfaction, pass the night upon the herbage of the forest, for both I and my noble horse have often had far worse quarters; but, to repose upon a bed of water, is by no means congenial. Hark! that snort of my brave beast betokens that there is more in our vicinity than my eye can reach. As the camel scents water in the desert, so my horse perceives oats in the distance, and where there are oats there *must* be a habitation. Where are we going now? The arms of the trees are so low that they will sweep me from the saddle; but, that snort has given me confidence, and I will not discourage such able guidance.”

The sagacious animal certainly had discovered a dwelling in that wild region; and, whether it belonged to friend or foe, the soldier determined to approach it. The house was tolerably capacious, but seemed to be imbedded in the woods, as if for the purpose of concealment. The suspicious soldier had almost resolved to abandon this inhospitable shelter, when a light suddenly appeared at one of the upper windows, and the shadow of a graceful female was reflected from it. The light, however, vanished in an instant, and the same dark quietude prevailed that reigned before. But, the weary soldier felt assured that there was kindness and hospitality at the hearth where the gentler sex presided, and, with this conviction, he delivered two or three blows upon the outer door, the echo of which went far into the woods. No answer was returned. All was as silent as if there were no life within. The wayfarer repeated his summons in a manner that could not be unheard; but the silence which followed was no less profound. He was about to assail the door with still greater force, when

a sudden flash of lighting, which illumined the whole front of the house, disclosed to his view a sturdy slave standing coolly at an upper window, exhibiting no disposition to afford him refuge from the raging storm. Incensed at this conduct, the soldier exclaimed :

“Hollo, you, sirrah, are you deaf; or have none of the common feelings of humanity in this dwelling? I am a soldier. I have lost my road. I and my horse are worn out with fatigue, and I ask shelter for the night from this most fearful storm.”

“Massa ’way,” replied the slave, slightly opening the window, now thus challenged, “and me ’mit no strangers when him ’way.”

“Then his instructions are most brutal,” exclaimed the angry soldier, “and if you refuse to shelter me and my poor horse we must pass this terrible night in these half-flooded woods.”

“Yes, massa,” replied the unmoved negro, “can’t come in.”

The soldier saw how vain it was to appeal to this vassal, and he therefore demanded :

“Where is your mistress?”

“Missus ’way, too,” replied the black.

“That is false,” thundered the soldier; then he continued : “Tell her, this instant, you rascal, that a soldier who has lost his road asks her hospitality to-night. If she refuse me this, tell her to dismiss me in person, and I will submit to her decision.”

The black did not reply, for that instant a sweet voice was heard to say :

“What means this, Philip? Did I not hear some stranger asking for admission, and that you refused it?” Then, advancing to the open window from which the black had held the dialogue with the stranger, she exclaimed : “Friend or enemy, whichever you may be, you are welcome to our poor roof. The hesitation was but the fruit of faithfulness and care; but to be obedient to directions on such a night as this we must close our hearts to feeling. Philip, admit the soldier, and let Sambo take his horse and feed it well.”

The door was quickly opened, the horse was conducted to

the stable, and in a few minutes the soldier was ushered into the presence of his fair hostess.

The stranger was much astonished at the extreme loveliness of his entertainer, and marveled at the strange destiny that had placed her in that remote dwelling in the woods. He thought her a sylvan goddess, so dazzling were her charms. Nor was his appearance without its impresson upon the lady. He had cast off his dripping cloak and battered hat, and the fatigue under which he suffered only contributed to render more prominent the classic features of his face. With an ease and grace that seemed hers by nature, the lady approached her guest and said:

“I must again assure you of a welcome, and ask your pardon for our tardy hospitality. That uniform, had it been visible in the darkness, would have gained ready credence with our faithful Philip, for we reverence the gallant Continentals; but our critical situation, the peril of the times, the marauding spirit of the British, added, just now, to the temporary absence of my father, have made us suspect that even our friends may be foes; but we will endeavor to atone for this injustice, and trust that you will esteem the future a compensation for the past. I have directed refreshments to be served, and with your permission I will leave you to enjoy them.”

“Lady,” said the soldier, with a blush upon his youthful face, “your courtesy makes me ashamed of the boisterous means by which I obtained entrance here. I deeply regret the outrageous character of my conduct, and condemn it as unbecoming a soldier, a gentleman, or—”

“Sir,” interposed the young mistress of the house, with an enchanting smile, “your penitence is too severe. If habitual caution caused our slave to be inconsiderate and stubborn, and the bitterness of the night made you impatient and somewhat violent, and we have both candor enough to acknowledge our errors, peace and good-will should follow, and I trust that our apologies have now reached this happy point.”

The lady then quitted the apartment, and immediately a plenteous repast was spread before the almost famished traveler. But his thoughts rested not upon the viands on the table. They were wandering after that fair form, and that sweet

voice, and when Philip entered to remove the remnants of the meal, he found to his astonishment that the meats remained untouched. The self-indulgent negro regarded the soldier with some awe when he perceived that he could sit at a banquet and ratify his hunger with its fumes. Retreating hastily to the kitchen, there, with his black associates clustered around the fitful fire, the slave began to propound the ills that this incident foreshadowed. An hour had passed away in the discussion of inquiries by these susceptible people, until their minds were laden with ideal terrors, when another assault was made upon the outer door, and with such vehemence that the report resounded through the quiet house, leaving an impression that the door was forced. A shriek of affright ascended from the kitchen, and the daughter of the house rushed to that region to ascertain the cause, and found the slaves crowded into a corner of the apartment, absolutely clinging to each other in abject fear, as if that were the manner in which to meet calamity.

"Philip!" exclaimed the lady, in astonishment.

And that trembling slave advanced from the crouching group, in obedience to the call of his young mistress. He felt a degree of shame and a warmth upon his face that would have been betrayed in blushes but for his sable hue.

"What means this cowardice, when courage is required?" said the lady reprovingly. "Are you, who are left to guard the house, and upon whose boldness I have relied, alarmed at a mere summons at the door?"

"Miss Be'trice," replied Philip, "dat ter'ble man," and the poor black pointed in the direction of the room where the stranger sat, and, after making many gesticulations, significant of what he did not say, he ended by adding, "is de one inside."

The lady, whom he called Beatrice, comprehending that Philip implied that her guest was in league with these without, exclaimed:

"Impossible!"

Philip, however, argued the fact in a manner almost as grotesque as his original charge, when Beatrice suddenly exclaimed, as if desirous of testing the integrity of her guest:

"Come with me, Philip, and, if I read his countenance aright, I may depend more upon his bravery than on yours."

But there was no need to seek the stranger, for that instant he rushed into the kitchen. He paused on seeing Beatrice, and at once lowered the sword which he had drawn. The slaves, who were assured by the presence of their mistress, had gradually emerged from their corner, but now rushed back again; but Philip, who already writhed beneath her severe reproaches, manfully stood his ground.

"I fear that the discord which brought me from my room is as much a cause of alarm to you as to myself," said the stranger, "but it affords me great pleasure to find that you are in safety. If there be aught that I can do to serve you, my best efforts are at your disposal."

"There are strangers outside who demand an entrance here, and none of my slaves have had the courage to question them," replied Beatrice.

"With your permission that duty shall be mine," said the soldier, "and if they, like myself, prove poor, benighted, way-worn travelers. I trust that you will not refuse to shelter them from such a night as this."

"Be it as you will," said Beatrice, with a deep, impressive voice, "I rely upon your honor and discretion."

"I would rather yield my life than be false in such a cause," said the gallant soldier, as he sought a window where he could hail the men who still hammered at the door.

"What want you here, my friends?" asked the soldier.

The hammering ceased, and then a voice replied, as composedly as if addressing a friend:

"Well, I guess, we wants three things—firstly, entrance, and that another blow 'ill give us; secondly, som'at to ate, and that I guess we shall find in plenty; and thirdly, some of old Chalfont's gold."

"What," retorted the soldier, rapidly, "are you thieves? Do you come to rob the house?"

"Oh, no, I guess we ain't," responded the same voice, while his companions seemed to chuckle at his humor. "We're honest trav'lers, but, as we're goin' to fureign parts where they don't like Congress-paper, we're jist come to change it for neighbor Chalfont's gold."

The soldier left the window. He would hold no further parley with the scoundrels, and while they recommenced their assault upon the door with redoubled force, he hastened to provide it with additional fastenings. But, he was too late. Just as he reached the hall the ponderous door gave way, and the assailants entered. Then screams arose from the poor slaves that would have appalled less reckless and less experienced robbers; but they heard them with derision. Beatrice, who was in the hall when the passage was forced, still stood there, pale and motionless. Philip, whose boldness seemed to increase in proportion with the danger, had armed himself with a heavy club, and placed himself before his mistress, ready to die in her defense. But in advance was the stranger guest; with his drawn sword, he stood before the ruffians, a more formidable barrier to their entrance than the one they had just demolished.

"Villains," he cried, "reluctant as I am to stain this blade with scoundrel blood, no man shall pass my sword and live."

The next instant a shot was fired, and before the smoke of the powder had cleared away, a groan announced that some one had fallen. A moment of terrible suspense ensued, and the crimsoned blade of the still uplifted weapon announced the end of another life. An expression of exultation on the part of Philip reached the craven negroes, and their wail was soon turned to joy as noisy. But, the struggle was not over. The one uninjured robber did not decamp. He stood gazing upon his disabled companions as they writhed in agony upon the ground. He was but heating his ill blood, for, suddenly exclaiming:

"I swore to avenge 'em, and I will," he, like a tiger when it attacks its prey, leaped toward the soldier, hoping to clutch him in his powerful grasp; but the young man's eye was as watchful as his arm was strong. With great activity he avoided the clutch, and the villain, encountering nothing but the air, fell headlong to the floor. Philip lost not a moment in taking advantage of the incident, and calling one or two of the boldest of the slaves to his assistance, bound the culprit, who, when he returned to consciousness, found himself a prisoner.

The danger being over, the soldier approached Beatrice, in

order to conduct her from the painful scene. She was speechless with emotion. When they had reached her apartment, and Beatrice had thrown herself upon a cushioned chair, the soldier, with great delicacy, remarked :

“ I will quit you now. You will be well composed alone. The event is one too common to a soldier's eye to make much impression in his mind, but is of too rough a nature for a lady's feelings.”

“ Remain, sir,” interposed Beatrice, with much effort, “ I have something more to say when I regain my power of speech.”

“ Your wish is a command, lady,” replied the soldier, and he seated himself upon a chair to which Beatrice pointed. Not another word was spoken by either for many minutes ; but much was passing in the minds of both. The heart of the soldier was filled with admiration, and that of Beatrice with the warmest gratitude. As soon, however, as the lady was sufficiently recovered, she said :

“ I could not defer the expression of my thanks a moment later than I recovered my power to speak, and that is why I invited you to remain. You have saved my life at least. My slaves were incompetent to the task. And when such a vital benefit is confessed, there can be no recompense in words—it must be in the feelings of the heart, and I will not affect to speak them. We are strangers ; but we must no longer remain so. This is the residence of Mr. Chalfont, and I am Beatrice, his only daughter. I had a brother, but he was lost to his parents in his youth, or rather in his infancy, beneath which great affliction my poor mother sunk into her grave.”

“ I am Randolph Beaumont, a captain in Colonel Storm's regiment of Continentals,” replied the soldier, as the young lady paused, apparently for this intelligence. “ My father, I should judge, resides not very many miles from here, and with him my only sister, Adeline. I have been long absent in the army ; but my regiment having returned to my native State, I obtained a few days of absence to revisit those dear to me at home.”

“ A few miles is a perilous distance in these troubled times,” remarked Beatrice, “ or I would make a visit of gratitude to your father and sister, for I am indebted to all your

race. But your home may be in ashes and its inmates gone, for the ravages of the British have extended far and near, and the brilliancy of day has been given to the night by the wanton burning of the dwellings of the peaceful. Our poor home has only escaped the common destruction by being hidden in the woods. Should such a calamity have occurred to them, here is an asylum for them. My arms and heart are open to them both. On Adeline I will bestow the love of a sister, and to your father I will render the duty of a daughter."

Randolph saw that Beatrice was fainting from exhaustion. The excitement of the night had subdued her strength, and she fell into Randolph's arms, as he rushed forward, unconscious and utterly helpless. The terrified Randolph instantly summoned her attendants, and quitted the room in anxiety, from which he was relieved by a subsequent assurance that she had partially recovered, and had retired for the night. His mind relieved upon this absorbing subject, he turned his attention to the prisoner. He was bound already, strongly secured, and committed to an empty up-stairs' room, for safe keeping. His lifeless companions were deposited in an out-house. The next object was to reinstate the door, and in doing this Randolph found the negroes active and willing under his guidance, and with their united efforts they soon placed the defenses in a state to withstand another attack. All being now in safety, the blacks retired to their quarters, and Randolph to his room, the former in noisy boastfulness of their late doings, but utterly ignoring their earlier cowardice.

Slumber was banished from the eyes of Captain Beaumont. He sat silently in his apartment, his mind engrossed by a single thought—Beatrice. He had forgotten the dead men, the fettered rogue, and the stirring incidents of the night, and remembered only that fair charmer whom he had so gallantly defended and preserved. Every word she spoke was a note of music to his heart, and, as he cherished and weighed each syllable, he wished he could revive the sweet sounds in which they were delivered. In reflections, hopes and fears, the short night passed and the dreary morning came—a morning of departure. At an early hour Philip knocked at Randolph's door, and receiving no answer, entered. The poor slave, to his great wonder, had to arouse him, not from slumber, but

from thought, and when he imagined that he had done so, he announced, with a rueful countenance, that in the night the bound robber had undone his rope with which he was secured, and using it, it was supposed, to lower himself from the window to the ground, and thus escape, had, by some means, become entangled in it, and was dead. The only word that seemed to catch the attention of the preoccupied thoughts of the soldier was the last, and associating this with the subject of his thought, he leaped from his seat, exclaiming :

“What, Beatrice *dead* !” and he rushed to the door to quit the room, perhaps to enter hers ; but the astonished Philip opposed his exit, and with much difficulty explained his meaning. Randolph received the correction with a smile, though with some regret that he had permitted such a manifestation of his feelings. Thus aroused, he repaired to the eating-room, and sat down alone to the solitary meal. Beatrice, he ascertained, was unable to appear, and thus his hopes were marred of seeing her again. This made him sad, since he had no just reason for delay. The danger had passed with the death of those who threatened it, and the exigencies of the service demanded his prompt return to his regiment, though the object with which he left should remain unachieved. Mr. Chalfont, too, was expected during the day, and Randolph did not wish to seem to await his thanks. Yet the soldier lingered. He believed himself to be resolved, but was irresolute ; and, while these anomalies still racked his mind, a messenger appeared from Beatrice, requesting that he would delay his departure until the arrival of her father. Randolph mused for a few moments, and then his sterner feelings triumphed.

“I dare not delay my journey,” he replied. “I am a soldier, the servant of my suffering country, and she requires every sword she can command. But I have something for Miss Chalfont’s private ear, which I would speak or write at her desire.”

Randolph uttered the latter sentence with emotion, which seemed to increase with each minute that the answer was deferred. When, at length, the messenger returned, she merely said that her mistress regretted that she could not see him personally. In an instant Randolph embraced the alternative ;

and, as if he had determined to leave the house in hope or despair, he wrote thus laconically :

“Beatrice—Conceive me prostrate at your feet. May I rise in hope, or must I remain there in despair?”

“RANDOLPH.”

The reply was not less remarkable, but it was not delivered until Randolph had nearly sunk beneath the intensity of his feelings. It ran thus :

“Randolph never need despair. Let Randolph rise.

“BEATRICE.”

Randolph absolutely leaped with joy, and, concealing the hallowed missive near his heart, he exclaimed :

“I have drunk of the elixir—I have tasted the balm of life,” and with such like expressions, and performing many such odd gyrations as to become a subject of merriment among the slaves in many an after-night, he mounted his horse, and galloped into the woods, where there was both room and solitude for the indulgence of the largeness of his happiness.

CHAPTER IV.

JASPER THE SCOUT.

THE morning that succeeded the night of tempest was magnificent, but the sun's resplendant rays lit up a scene of devastation. Uprooted trees of gigantic size lay shivered on the earth, while others, almost as lordly, were cut in twain, their headless and jagged trunks still standing erect—a ghastly spectacle of their former grace.

Amid the splendor and desolation of this scene, the merry sound of laughter rung through the woods. Peal succeeded peal, which, repeated in echo by the surrounding heights, filled the air with voices, and yet all this hilarity was produced by a single man—Jasper the Scout—who thus indulged his solitary mirth as he sat upon the trunk of the prostrate tree which covered the grave of the pots of gold

Jasper was a tall, powerful man, of about twenty-two years of age. Although so young, he had been four years with the army. There was a mystery about him that could not be penetrated. He was a man of education, and of considerable ability, if not genius, in military affairs; but even these he frequently disguised, by affecting a provincial dialect, and flatly disowning services that would have redounded to his reputation. There was one person, however, to whom he seemed devoted, and who was supposed to possess his confidence, and that was Colonel Storm, the leader of one of the most indomitable regiments in the revolutionary army, and of whom even the great Washington was wont humorously to remark that Storm was one of the calmest of officers when under fire, but a very hurricane, nevertheless. The colonel was double Jasper's age, but, despite this, and the great difference in rank, they frequently passed hours together; and it was said by those who should be well informed—and in tents, as in residences, these are generally the servants—that the affection of son and father existed between them. This report was by many disbelieved, for no one was permitted to be present when the colonel descended from his rank to become a familiar with the scout, or when the scout presumed beyond his lowliness. He was an incessant wanderer, and had made Eastern Virginia his study for months prior to the date of the events here recorded, during which he had become acquainted with many of its residents, and by his intercession with the British, by whom he had been slightly trusted, had saved many of their dwellings from pillage and the torch.

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed the scout, and while again and again he repeated the laugh, he pressed his hands upon his breast, to support himself against a noisy gayety he could not restrain. When at length the power of speech returned, he exclaimed:

"With this great secret, I am qualified to be financial minister. Congress, ignorant of my knowledge, as of the wealth of Sidney Chalfont, would, in their extremities, rather seek my services than starve their gallant soldiers. It is a maxim in humanity, that the end of all things is the grave; but, here the grave is made the instrument of life and comfort." And the woods again reëchoed with his laugh.

"But let me reflect," he resumed, when this boisterousness had abated. "If gold be found that belongs to an unknown owner, that gold can not be justly used by him who finds it; but the owner should be straightway sought and found; if, therefore, gold be found that never has been lost, but is taken from the place of security where its owner deposited it, there is even less justice in the second appropriation than in the first. Thus, Sidney Chalfont, I will not touch thy hidden wealth. I can resist its tempting luster, and well be it for thee that he to whom thy secret is disclosed is guided by his own philosophy. Still, I must warn thee of these incautious night-walkings, and that there are other beasts of prey that prowl through these woods than wolves and panthers, for only an hour before thy lantern attracted my attention, three cavaliers crossed thy path, who would not have scrupled to have taken thy life for such a treasure. These were Bill Coon, Dan Isaacs, and Micky Fox. Had these villains seen thee, long before this hour thy treasury would have been emptied—all thy money gone—if I had permitted it, that is.

"If Sidney insists that I deserve recompense because I refuse to be a thief," continued Jasper, in his serio-comic strain, "and, after the manner of generous donors, asks what he shall confer, I, looking at ultimate inheritance as well as immediate recompense, unhesitatingly will reply—*thy daughter, Beatrice*. He might be startled at the boldness of the suggestion, considering the equivocal position of the claimant; but, then, he must be reminded of the magnificence of the claim, and thus, perhaps, all scruples will be silenced. But, I wish not to be overheard in this soliloquy, for although I may be a keener woodsman than old Sidney Chalfont, there are many secret niches in these rough resting-places that might conceal an ear."

The scout then for some moments scrutinized the vicinity. Perceiving nothing, he raised his rifle and prepared to start, and after a few minutes of thought, and with a smile still upon his face at the occurrences of the night, he struck the trail of the old owner of the pots, as if he was disposed to follow him home. Fragments of splintered trees and other consequences of the fury of the storm rendered his path rough and difficult, but, as he surmounted these impediments, a smile

still played upon his visage, as if the frolicsome conceit in reference to the hand of the lovely Beatrice entertained his mind.

It was late when he reached a very narrow footway in the forest, that, from the spreading and lowering branches, might not have been seen by a casual traveler. He paused in astonishment as he was about to enter, as he observed on the surface of the earth the deep impressions of a horse's hoofs. It was evident that the scout was alarmed at these unusual evidences in a spot well known to him, and he hastened forward with redoubled speed, until he reached the Chalfont residence. His fears were yet more intense when his practised eyes detected that there had been an attack upon the entrance door. The self-possession of the intrepid man for a moment abandoned him, but he was instantly aroused by the clatter of half a dozen voices, and was surrounded by as many slaves, from whose incoherent and rival vociferations, he could not even ascertain that two men had been slain, and one strangled, until he was dragged to the outhouse where the bodies lay.

"Oh," exclaimed the scout, and in a moment there was silence among the noisy crowd, "I know the hideous features well. They are those of three untamable monsters of the woods—Billy Coon, Dan Isaacs, and Micky Fox. You have made more widows, orphans, and desolate homes than any dozen fiends in Tarleton's army, and if you quitted this life too suddenly for repentance, and your punishment in the regions to which you are transported be proportioned to your villainies on earth, it will take a brood of devils, with sharp pitchforks, to do you justice."

This was the only oration pronounced over the bodies of the marauders. They were buried in an obscure corner, and, as the negroes filled up the grave, they whispered to each other that "Massa Jasper spoke awful."

When the scout withdrew from the place where the dead ruffians lay, he took Philip with him, from whom he ascertained that Beatrice was in safety, and that Mr. Chalfont had returned. This intelligence relieved his anxiety, for he loved these lonely people, not only for their uniform kindness and hospitality to him, but from an innate feeling wholly

inexplicable. Who the gallant soldier could be to whom Beatrice owed so much he could not imagine; but, he gathered sufficient from the rather extravagant recital of Philip to admire his dauntless conduct, and to suspect that the lovely creature whom he had preserved, was fain to reward him with somewhat more than gratitude for her deliverance.

Repairing to the house, the scout soon encountered old Chalfont, who was greatly agitated at the occurrences of the night. After expressing his pleasure at seeing Jasper, he related them to him as he had learned them from his daughter.

"Who can this Beaumont be?" asked the father, as he concluded. "He said his family resided not many miles from here; but that must have been imagination, for he had lost his road and knew not where he was, and, what is worse, from all that I can learn, he left the house as ignorant as he came."

"Beaumont!" exclaimed the scout with a nasal drawl, usually affected, as if to support his assumed character. "I guess I know him. 'Tis true, he's a cap'tain in Storms regiment, and a braver man never handled a blade. His father and sister live down the holler about ten miles off; but I reckon he's not bin home for many a long day."

"Miles are leagues in this dangerous country, Jasper," replied Chalfont, "but I owe much to the son, and will not fail to declare my gratitude to the father."

"You are getting pretty largely into debt in this especial class of feeling," remarked the scout, significantly, to himself; "and if I do not judge the fair Beatrice wrongly, she will far more willingly aid you in discharging the obligations due to this martial creditor, than what you may in generosity profess as being due to myself."

"What have I," resumed the old man, after a short pause, "to tempt the plunderer? Food I have in plenty; but this I never deny to any traveler who asks my hospitality. What can they covet, Jasper? They can not think that I have gold?"

"Many do," said Jasper. "I guess Billy Coon, Dan Isaacs, and Micky Fox did."

"But *you* do not, Jasper?" inquired Chalfont, with a

scrutinizing look that would have subdued a less imperturbable man than the scout.

"No!" replied the scout, and the negative sounded so absolute, and was delivered with such force, that it seemed to proceed from a conviction in the heart, which could scarcely be authorized by the little that had been spoken on the subject. The man of cupidity was uneasy, and the scout watched his furtive glances with amusement. Like a skillful cross-examiner, however, he dared not venture upon another question at the moment; but he reserved the subject until he could again approach it in a more subtle manner. The scout was prepared for the contingency, and was willing to await the result, for, as he had nothing that he was desirous to conceal, he could afford to be generous in feeling toward one whose wealth—the anchor of his life—was in his power.

Mr. Chalfont at this juncture was called away to inspect the refitting of the door and the repairs of other damages, and Jasper accompanied him. When this was ended, they returned and partook of some refreshments, and then the scout plainly perceived that his cunning host was about to resume the conversation.

"Where did you pass last night, Jasper?" asked the father, as indifferently as if it were a question of no importance.

"In the Lower Lagoon Wood," replied the scout, undisturbedly.

"Where?—in Lagoon Wood?" repeated Chalfont, with some trepidation. "No one but a madman would take shelter in a wood on such a night."

"And yet I seed others there," remarked the scout.

"Why, man, you must be wrong," said the old man, in considerable agitation, "Lagoon Wood is just below the hollow; you can not mean that you and others were there last night?"

"I know the wood, and know the holler, too, I guess," said the scout.

The old man was astounded. He now believed that he was not the only tenant of the wood on the previous night; nay, he even thought at some period of the night he might probably have been seen; but, he was not prepared to give credit to the appalling fact that the scene beneath the venerable oak—from the raising of the first sod to the replacing of

the same—was witnessed by other than himself. So he remarked :

“ Well, Jasper, you did not see me there ? ”

Thus challenged, the scout no longer hesitated, but replied :

“ I seed a man with a lantern in his hand, and a spade and mattock on his shoulder. He walked with his eye fixed upon the ground. He didn't hear the thunder that roared above his head. He didn't see the li'tnin' that flooded the wood wi' flame. He didn't mind the wind that crushed the trees on every side, nor the rain that fell in rivers from the heavens. But, he walked straight on with his lantern and his tools, as ef he'd som'at on his mind that was greater than the storm.”

Chalfont winced at this graphic description of himself, and begun to feel in terror of the sequel ; but the scout proceeded :

“ I took this man for Sidney Chalfont. He stopped beneath an oak—he put down his spade and mattock—he measured paces from the tree—he raised the sods and put 'em carefully by—he dug deep into the 'arth—and—”

“ Villain, you have my secret,” vociferated the miser in a fit of maniacal despair, and, seizing a pistol that was suspended above the mantel, he pointed it at Jasper's heart. There was a flash and a cloud of smoke, and for a few seconds, the consequence of that hasty vengeance could not be distinguished ; but, as the atmosphere became more clear, and the figure could be perceived, the tall and manly form of the scout was seen standing uninjured, just opposite to the man who sought his life.

“ Sidney Chalfont,” continued the scout, with a tranquillity undisturbed by this frightful incident, “ the power that seed you in the forest and that sees you now, has saved you from a great crime. Hear me to the end, and then, ef you think my conduct desarves your rage, do your will upon me. I didn't foller you from cur'osity, for I wo'dn't give, for all your bags of gold, the valer of the 'arth w'at cover 'em. Ef I wanted it, 'twas in my power to git it, wi'out comin' here to you. But, I follered you 'cause I seed in the woods them very men what died yesternight, and I knowed that blood and pillage was their trade. I follered fer your pertection.”

During this explanation the old man had dropped the

pistol upon the floor. Deep contrition succeeded to his appetite for revenge, and he supplicated the youthful scout for his forgiveness. But, the generous fellow cast back the word. He said it should be forgetfulness—that he should blot from his memory both the treasure and the more recent incident.

That night was spent happily by the two friends, and before they separated for bed, the old man said :

“Jasper, my friend, I will never remove that treasure until the other heirs to it are present at its exhumation. It is not mine. It is the property of three brothers, of whom I am the eldest. It is the patrimony of my father to his children. My brothers had quitted England when my father died, and I, pretending that they were dead, seized upon the property as my own, and from that hour of dishonesty it has been my curse, and now it has driven me to the verge of murder. From this moment you shall be joint trustee with me, and together we will seek those brothers whom I almost despair of finding.”

The scout accepted the trust, because he thought it would add to the happiness of father and daughter.

The next morning Beatrice made her appearance before the departure of the scout. She was extremely pale, and was evidently suffering from the horrors of that fearful night. She made two or three efforts to speak privately to the scout, but had been as often interrupted. At length there was an opportunity afforded.

“Jasper, I have not until now fully estimated the danger to which Captain Beaumont was exposed in defense of me. I was too ill to see him—too weak to express my feelings. If you should see him—as perchance you may—tell him that my heart is filled with gratitude, and that I nightly offer up my prayers for his safety. And, Jasper, if it be in your power to render him any service, do so for my sake.”

“I will do your bidding,” replied the scout, “for to be asked to do a thing by that sweet mouth is no less than a command; but, when you add ‘for my sake,’ there is not a cavalier under Washington who would not die in such a cause.”

As the scout passed again into the forest, he said, smilingly :
“I fear that that this gratitude is only a mask for some intenser

feeling. But, though Beatrice speaks in cipher, no doubt Randolph has the key in his understanding. I think my resolve to seek her hand is well abandoned."

As Jasper disappeared among the trees, Beatrice remarked: "What a manly figure is Jasper. I can not regard him as a scout. He seems as one performing a character which he sometimes forgets, and appears without disguise. That little flattery addressed to me was worthy of an accomplished gentleman." She mused a moment and sighed. "I wonder who he is?" she murmured.

CHAPTER V.

GREEK MEETING GREEK.

It was in that delightful hour of a summer's day which intervenes between its close and night, when two figures were discerned sitting in the open air. Around the garden chair on which they rested, a medley of fragrant climbing plants had been carefully trained, which, meeting above their heads, there blossomed, forming a dome of floral beauty. Adeline Beaumont and Major Knowlton were the twain. A blush was upon the maid's cheek and her eyes were cast upon the ground. The manner of the major was earnest, tender, and sincere.

"This," he said, "is the most sacred spot on earth to me. Here I was assigned to death by the stern principles of your father, and here I was rescued to life by the graceful interposition of the daughter, assisted in this work of clemency by her poor, but faithful slave; and here, as the heart of the father yielded to the cry of mercy, the very soul of the refugee was from that moment a captive to his love. Never shall I forget that scene. It was impressive beyond the power of delineation, and should supply the subject of a family picture for future ages, for there is a fine moral lesson in its teachings. When I leaped yon hedge, dear Adeline, almost the last effort of my poor horse, I was far more prepared for death than love; yet

It was the preliminary action to the ruling passion of my after-life. But, you are meditative, dear Adeline; may I inquire the cause that distracts your mind?"

"I have been thinking, Reginald," replied Adeline, "how rarely is happiness unaccompanied with pain. Nothing on earth seems to be without alloy—for while our love is as true as ever filled the human heart, yet we are the children of rival nations—nations so filled with anger that they have drawn their swords, seeking each other's blood. You and my brother have places in my breast, but still you are soldiers in adverse armies, and, in the ferocity of battle, Randolph may die by Reginald's hand."

"Impossible!" exclaimed Knowlton; "nature would recoil from such an outrage. My very instinct would point out the kindred blood of Adeline, and he would be a foe too sacred for my sword. Dismiss these morbid feelings from your thoughts, dear Adeline, or your love for me may suffer by its indulgence."

"Never, Reginald!" replied the now impassioned maid. "I know that you would never do aught that was not upheld by honor and strict duty. But, if my brother—my father's only son—and whom I dearly love, should fall by the deadly weapon of him to whom I had pledged my heart, could that same victor, dyed in my brother's blood, claim the devotion of his despairing sister?"

"Adeline, my love, you will drive me to madness," exclaimed Reginald.

"Hark!" said Adeline, grasping the hand of Reginald, in her intense agitation.

"It is but a horseman traveling along the road," remarked Reginald. "You are excited Adeline, and because some one rides the same road that I did on that eventful evening and at no less speed, you are ready to imagine that another refugee is about to supplicate your hospitality."

At this moment a horseman emerged from the trees that masked much of the road. He instantly cast his attention upon the garden, and then, with a cry of exultation, dashed directly for the hedge.

"It is—it is—Randolph!" exclaimed Adeline.

"Who?" asked the astonished Reginald.

"My brother, my dear brother," responded Adeline; then,

her thoughts recurring to the danger of the major, she continued, in a voice of alarm :

“Reginald, fly—fly, or you are lost!”

“Fly, Adeline!” said the major, with a mixture of sorrow and reproach.

“Oh, Reginald, do not repeat my words,” said Adeline, in agony. “I conjure you, if you love me, seek some place of concealment, that the love of my brother to his sister and to his father may not be disturbed by the presence of a hostile uniform.”

Reginald could not resist. Though loth to retire in an unsoldierly manner, he felt that, even if there were no more imperative reason for obedience, he should but ill requite the hospitality he had received if he sought to provoke a quarrel with a son of his generous host, and the brother of one whom he loved better than his life. He therefore retreated to the ample concealment of an adjoining shubberry, and scarcely escaped the lynx-eye of the impetuous soldier. He saw the brother leap from his horse, fold Adeline in his arms, and call her again and again his dear and lovely sister. Then he inquired who was standing by her side as he rode toward her; whether it was not their father, and if faithful Carlos were well. All these questions were asked with great rapidity. Fortunately, no responses were required. After a moment or two had been thus employed, the gallant soldier led his fair sister up the garden, and they soon disappeared together in the house, leaving the major and the horse to ruminate upon the incidents they had witnessed.

“I envy the place that even a brother occupies in that sweet breast,” said Reginald, as he emerged from his hiding-place, “so jealous am I of every atom of its love. Yet we must separate. Adeline fears for my own safety, and it is plain that the noble father wishes to conceal that he has given refuge to his country’s enemy. I will not again enter that house of tranquillity and peace. Adeline expects this of me, and she shall find that I am equal to it. I must endeavor, however, to remove from her mind those frightful impressions in reference to the relative positions in the hostile armies of her brother and myself, as I perceive how they will prey upon her life. She will unquestionably seek me as quickly as opportunity offers

and then for a farewell and an attempt to join my comrades."

In the mean time Randolph and Adeline had entered the house. The meeting between the son and father, after a separation of two years, was most affecting, which was increased, perhaps, by the suddenness of the son's appearance. After the first effusions of their joy, refreshments were provided, and so delighted was the young soldier at this reünion that he would not permit his sister to leave him for an instant. Hours of happiness were chronicled as minutes by this devoted family; but, although Adeline graced her brother's presence with her unceasing smiles, still a feverish anxiety rested upon her brow, and her ear as well as her thoughts were never diverted from the garden. Yet to escape was impossible. At length Randolph arose and said:

"I must steal five minutes from these hours of bliss, that my gallant Tempest may not feel neglected in my absence from his stable."

"These doors open upon the garden," said Adeline, rising and placing herself in the formal position of a sentinel before the entrance. "The opposite one will conduct to the stables."

"Upon my word, dear Adeline," replied her brother, laughingly, "you appear as earnest as if you intended to deny my passage; but, as I have the pass-word," (and he pressed her coral lips), "I thus defeat you," and he sportively evaded her and rushed out.

"Oh, father, father!" exclaimed Adeline, as the door closed, and she fell into her parent's arms.

"Be comforted, my darling child," said the father, with great emotion, and divining the cause of his daughter's agony; "Carlos has whispered me a few words from Knowlton. He will await an opportunity to see us, and then he intends to attempt to reach the British army. He leaves this night, dear girl."

"But the garden, dear father—the garden!" gasped out in hysteric efforts the suffering Adeline. "If he and Randolph should meet there?" Then she sunk into unconsciousness.

While this scene was passing, the unsuspecting Randolph marched down the garden, remarking the changes since he

left his father's house, and reënjoying all the happiness of earlier days. The moon, with her pale and modest light, made the night so beautiful, that, thinking of Beatrice as well as of the charms around him, he suddenly found himself beyond the spot where he had met with Adeline. He prepared to return, not to be too long absent, when he thought he beheld the figure of a man retreating from his path.

"Who is there?" he asked, but as the figure still receded, he added, "I will follow wherever you may fly," increased his pace, and overtook the fugitive, who, finding himself detected, turned to confront his pursuer.

"What," exclaimed the astounded Randolph, "do I behold a British officer?"

The figure bowed.

"Lurking around the dwelling of an American, true to his country's liberty," continued Randolph. "It is well that one has arrived within a few hours powerful enough to demand an explanation of such conduct, and who does not care," he added, with a little sarcasm, and touching the hilt of his sword, "how roughly it is delivered, nor how quickly."

"I will not affect to misunderstand you sir," replied the major (for it was he), with great courtesy, "but, I prefer an explanation in words to weapons, and I protest that I am here for no purpose of hostility or espial, nor for any ill whatever."

"It must be false, sir," responded Randolph, with great warmth, "the hour is not one selected for honorable purposes, and certainly your very agile efforts to escape are more like the impulse of guilt than innocence."

"Sir, for want of better cause," said the major, "you endeavor to force me to a combat by your violent and intemperate language; but I have no weapon for you."

"I ought to know that, gallant Briton," said Randolph, exasperated at the coolness of his rival, "you travel with the torch, and war upon the peaceful."

"Your insolence shall still be rewarded by my forbearance," was the scornful reply of the major.

"I will parley with you no longer," exclaimed the furious Randolph, drawing his sword, "if there be naught but cowardice in your scabbord, cast down your sword and ask mercy of your victor."

Keen as this language was to the ear of a gallant soldier, Knowlton did not forget that it was spoken by Adeline's brother. His love for her would not permit him to resent, with soldierly indignation, the provocation and defiance of his passionate assailant, and he again endeavored to withdraw. Randolph perceived his object, and misjudging his motive, pressed forward with greater vigor, determined by taunts to force him to a combat.

"I wish you were a foe more worthy of my steel," pursued Randolph. "You are one of these British heroes who prefer meeting your enemy when you are ten to one; but your tardy courage shall avail you nothing, for, rather than allow you to escape, I will strike you to the earth with your disgraced sword still resting in its scabbard."

The major had now reached a point beyond which there was no retreat without exposing himself to the assault of the impassioned Randolph, who was only a few yards distant; he therefore reluctantly drew his sword.

"God knows, and call you to witness, how unwillingly I enter upon this contest. It is one wholly of defense, and one to which I submit because I have no alternative but death."

"Fear not, bold sir," replied Randolph, tauntingly, "I will duly testify as to your repugnance to the combat. The world shall not remain in ignorance of the incidents of the fight, if that will contribute to the peace of your ghostly shadow."

Then Randolph cast himself upon his antagonist, and for some minutes nothing but the clash of swords rung through the stillness of the night. The impetuous Randolph soon discovered that he had encountered a stouter swordsman than he had imagined. In vain he made every passage of which he was master; they were met with skill and adroitness, for although the major did not return a lunge, but stood strictly upon the defensive, it was plain to Randolph that his powerful arm and eagle eye were as well trained to the attack as the repulse. Annoyed even at this forbearance, and fighting with great vigor, Randolph exhibited symptoms of exhaustion, which the major perceiving, cried out:

"A pause, sir, if you will."

Randolph construing this into weakness, at least equal to his own, rejected the suggestion with disdain, when the major,

availing himself of the diversion caused by the exchange of words, by a rapid and exquisite movement disarmed his antagonist, and the next instant Randolph stood before this rival without his sword, without a touch from the major's weapon. Randolph yet felt deeply wounded in the heart, for at the moment he would have preferred death to the humiliation of defeat. His triumphant antagonist, however, paused not to enjoy his victory, but immediately withdrew, saying:

"Farewell, sir. I never strove against an abler sword, and though I might thus be proud of the result, I sincerely deplore the combat. If it should reach an ear beyond our own, I trust to your honor to do me justice with your family."

The discomfited Randolph made no reply. He raised his fallen sword, shook his hand reproachfully at the blade, returned it to the scabbard, and then slowly and thoughtfully advanced toward his home. He entered just as Adeline had recovered from her unconsciousness, and who, yielding to the intensity of her feelings, threw herself into his arms, exclaiming:

"Oh, Randolph, Randolph, my brother, are you in safety?"

"Ah, Adeline, my sister," replied Randolph, clasping her to his breast, "your ear detected the clash of swords. I feared it would, but no injury has been done. I have been punished by defeat, still I have been taught a lesson in generosity and forbearance, which may not be without its usefulness." Then Randolph succinctly related all that had occurred, and as he proceeded with his narrative, the shades of distress were banished from the face of Adeline.

"Ah, Adeline," said the brother, as he concluded, "you must not permit your heart to be captivated by the bravery and manly conduct of this worthy Briton, for, as a soldier, I am still his enemy, and, as a daughter of your outraged country, you must be so too."

This iron judgment of the brother excluded him from the sister's or even the father's confidence on that one subject, and again Adeline was sad. Late in the night, when this devoted family separated, Adeline whispered in the ear of her parent:

"Father, has not Reginald acted nobly?"

"To admiration, Adeline," replied the grateful father, "and

Randolph does his magnanimity justice." Then he added, 'but he will scarcely attempt to see us again to-night.'

Adeline, however—the feeling of hope large in her heart—watched from her chamber window for more than an hour, vainly trusting to distinguish in the moon-lit landscape even the shadow of the stately form that occupied her thoughts, and then retired to her bed to sob herself to slumber.

In the meanwhile the major—well pleased that the combat had terminated so fortunately, and that the brother of Adeline had escaped with no other wound than that inflicted upon his pride—had retreated far from the spot where Randolph had been defeated, but with a remote hope that Adeline might seek him in the vicinity of the place he had quitted, he returned to the chair where they had lately so often sat. But, the fairy vision was not there, and there was no other sound that disturbed the deep quiet of the night, than the noisy signals of the insects of the hours of darkness, and the occasional struggle of a falling leaf as it loosened from the lofty branches of its parent tree and fell to earth. He was about to venture nearer to the house, when a slight touch upon the shoulder made him turn in alarm, fearing that it might be his late antagonist, who, dissatisfied with the result of their recent contest, had returned to demand still further satisfaction; but he was relieved when a voice which he knew was not Randolph's, exclaimed, scarcely above a whisper:

"Ef you're wishful to avoid a fatal danger, major, you'll be off within the hour."

"What danger?" exclaimed the major, with great rapidity.

"The danger of bein' taken as a spy," replied the voice, "for Gen'ral Washin'ton's 'stablished his lines a mile or two beyond this garden."

The speaker, as he uttered these words, emerged from the dark shadow of the surrounding trees, and as the eye of the major fell upon the tall, manly form, he exclaimed:

"Jasper, is it you?"

"Yeas, major," said the scout, "you're in great danger, and I've the power to save you; but ef you wait here another half hour I can't do't."

The next morning, when Adeline entered the breakfast

room, her father was there alone. As he pressed her to his heart, he said :

“Adeline, Reginald is gone. His horse was taken from the stable in the night, and Carlos has traced the footsteps of two horses for some distance. He thinks they are those of Reginald and Jasper the scout.”

“Jasper !” exclaimed Adeline, in terror ; “why, he will conduct Reginald to his death.”

“He is incapable of such treachery, my love,” said Mr. Beaumont, “and Reginald has some motive for his retreat that he dared not presume to communicate to us.”

At this juncture Randolph entered, and poor Adeline, like many others, was compelled to assume the mask of happiness while deep despair was feeding upon her heart. As Randolph sipped his coffee and endeavored to amuse his father and sister by conversation, he suddenly remarked :

“By the by, that British major disturbed my slumbers, and although I can not but admire his conduct, I trust it will not provoke you to too much gratitude.”

Little did Randolph think that a more devoted feeling occupied his sister's heart.

CHAPTER VI.

RANDOLPH IN CHAINS AND ECSTASY.

CORNWALLIS had ravaged one half of Virginia, and had carried off an immense number of its slaves, not for the purpose of liberation, but to sell them into, perhaps, a severer bondage. He effected these excesses by mounting his cavalry upon the able horses of the planters, which he levied for the frightful work, and as there was no force that could oppose him, these gay equestrians plundered at their ease. General Washington resolved not only to repress these enormities upon a defenseless people, but to punish their authors. To coöperate in this movement, Rochambeau marched his French contingent from Newport to the banks of the Hudson

There he was joined by Washington. It was thought necessary to practice a few devices upon General Clinton, and to affect to be preparing to attack New York, that he might be deceived as to the real object, and when this *ruse* was thought to have succeeded, the troops were marched through the ferries toward Virginia. The well-clad troops of France excited some jealousy in the minds of their ragged and shoeless allies, and when they reached Philadelphia this feeling had approached to mutiny; but, it was quickly soothed when it was announced that clothing, arms, and half a million dollars had reached Boston from France, which would enable General Washington to do justice to his men. Upon this assurance not another word of complaint was heard.

Randolph Beaumont was attached to this army of approach, and Major Knowlton to that of retreat, for no sooner did General Cornwallis hear of the advance of his old and determined rival, than he fell back toward the James' river, in order to fortify some point where his escape might be effected by water if visited by defeat. Thus, there being no apprehension of any immediate engagement, Randolph obtained leave of absence for a few days in order to visit his father and sister, from whom he had been long absent. In this character of a wanderer he had met with far more of adventure than if he had remained with his armed companions, for in the short space of a few hours he had lost himself in the woods, had gained entrance to a home which closed its portals to such nightly ramblers, and had there saved the fairest of fair maidens from a worse fate than death, and the dwelling from pillage, and lost his own heart in the effort. Then riding from this scene of his knighterrantry to his father's home, he would there have slain his sister's suitor had not that suitor opposed to him an irresistible defense; but he knew not with whom he fought. He was ignorant that Adeline had saved the life of Reginald as he had that of Beatrice; or that his dear sister had bestowed her heart on one whom she had preserved just as he had given his to Beatrice. Had he known these facts before his entrance to the garden, he might have hesitated to have treated even a British officer with such harshness when invested with the sacred mantle of his sister's love.

As General Cornwallis retreated to Yorktown, and showed a disposition to defend that place, General Washington, aware of the wily character of his foe, found it necessary to dispatch a trusty messenger to Lafayette to guard strictly against the escape of the British by the Carolinas, while Admiral De Grasse, who held the passage of the Chesapeake, with a fleet that kept the English admiral in awe, cut off the usual resort of the British, when stoutly pressed, to the safety of their ships. Randolph was selected for this mission, in which there was no other danger than in meeting with small bodies of Tories, or their myrmidons, whose malignity was greater than that of their foreign enemies. Captain Beaumont, however, had no fears, and with no other dispatches than those committed to his memory, he commenced his journey. Although the task was somewhat more arduous than he had contemplated, he reached the headquarters of the enthusiastic Frenchman, to whom he discharged his commission. He was not long detained. With military promptness, Lafayette furnished a reply, assuring him that all his skill should be employed to achieve the wishes of his superior. One day's rest refreshed the young Virginian, and with the single trooper who had accompanied him, as a guide, he started upon his return. He was desirous to retrace the road by which they had so safely traveled; but, the stubborn trooper, under the pretense that they had approached too near some Tory residences, made choice of a different path, so that when night came, and they had picketed their horses and prepared for a few hours rest beneath no better shelter than the trees, they found themselves suddenly surrounded by enemies. Randolph drew his sword, but by the glimmer of a torch which one of the ruffians had lighted, he found himself in front of half a dozen scoundrels, each with a pistol pointed to his heart, and he yielded. He was roughly seized and disarmed, and as unceremoniously searched, but nothing being found upon him, he was next day closely questioned. He acknowledged belonging to the patriot army, a fact which his attire disclosed; and that he was on his way to join General Washington, who was advancing toward Yorktown, "and from whose ranks," he added, "no true lover of his country should be absent at this crisis." A menace, and the furious visages

of his captors proved that the name of Washington was not revered by them, and he was silent until one of the band approached to bind his eyes. Against this he expostulated, when the villain, as if quite prepared to meet the contingency, pointed up to the stout branch of a neighboring tree, saying, abruptly :

“ Would ye rayther swing there? If so, ye can be accommodated. We’re detarmined to close your eyes t’our proceedings. I don’t care whether ’tis with the rope or this bit o’ bunting.”

As Randolph looked round upon the scowling countenances revealed by the flaring torch, he thought he perceived, upon one face alone, an expression of anxiety as to the result of this brutal threat, as if he well knew the desperate character of the speaker. It was the last thing he saw, and was a gleam of hope in that gloomy horizon, for the next instant his eyes were so tightly muffled that night and day was alike to him ; at the same time, his arms were pinioned behind, and his hands were confined together. Thus trussed and blinded, and in the power of such remorseless villains, his manly courage might have failed him, had he not trusted that the mighty power, to whom we all appeal in our hour of agony, had allotted him one friend even among this desperate band.

In this sightless and helpless state Randolph was hurried forward, the ruffian that had bound him guiding his footsteps. He could distinctly hear that he was followed by his horse, and the other members of the band ; but the horse of the trooper was not with them, nor did he think that that personage was either, and he now doubted the honesty of the man. The truth was that the soldier was known to one of the band, and, upon taking an oath that he would not rejoin Washington, was permitted to depart, perhaps too glad of even this hollow pretext of escaping from the perils of the war. After a long march, which was doubly distressing to one whose eyes and limbs were bound, the scoundrels halted for refreshment. Randolph fell to the ground with exhaustion, and in this painful situation his attention was attracted to a whispered consultation among his captors as to his fate.

“ Let’s hang him here,” suggested the brute who had been foremost in promoting his sufferings, and whose voice he

recognized, "'tis a job soon done, and I guess I've rope enough. I've allus enough for that," and he seemed to chuckle at this notion of his murderous providence.

But this did not meet the approval of the others, and after much conversation, to which Randolph listened almost breathlessly, a voice which had not before spoken, and which he thought must belong to that inspiring eye from which he had gleaned such hope, said :

"Ef we must go there, comrades, let's take him with us, and in the mornin' a couple of us can take him to the English lines, and t'others can go about them other matters."

This disposition was assented to. There was a dissentient growl from him who so sternly advocated the rope ; but the decision of the majority was final. Randolph now understood that he was to be turned over as a prisoner to the enemy—a thought that gave him a short pang of pain. He still lay prostrate upon the sward where he had fallen, and there he thought of Beatrice, his father, and his sister, and of his blighted prospects of approaching glory. But ever hopeful, he also thought of that kind eye which was visible even in his darkness, and that the accidents of a night, which he was to pass he knew not where, might contribute to his liberty. While he indulged in these reflections he was aroused by the brute who appeared to be appointed to his guardianship.

"I can not walk," said Randolph, as the fellow raised him on his feet, "release my eyes and hands, or put me on my horse, for it is most barbarous to force me forward on foot in this state."

"Let him ride," exclaimed the same kind voice that had advocated life, and who had seemingly some estimate of Randolph's sufferings.

"I'd rayther let him hang, I guess," responded the fellow who had professed such attachment to the rope ; but he was not otherwise disposed to dispute the order, for, leading the horse beside his prisoner, he roughly assisted him to mount, and then led the animal forward by the rein. Randolph experienced relief from this mode of traveling, and he felt more and more the presence of some unknown friend.

After hours of this slow method of progressing, he became aware that they were approaching some house, and that it

was there they were to rest. He knew not whether it was a den of thieves or the residence of honest men, from whom he might derive some hope, but he found that they halted for a time, while two or three of the party were sent forward to reconnoiter. A slight whistle soon announced that all was safe, and Randolph was again led on.

"Here is our pris'ner," said the voice of the one whom he had thought to be his friend, as he addressed the owner of the dwelling; "he's a desp'rate char'cter, and we want a strong room fer him till mornin'."

"I'll do my best to please you, my friends," replied the person addressed, "I have always performed the hospitality of the woods so far as my poor means go, and I'll do the same to you."

"But you've took good care to live in a part of 'em that not one in a thousand can find," growled out the hard voice of Randolph's guardian.

These were sweet words to the captive's ear. He felt that he was about to be sheltered beneath the roof of one who was not of this ruffian band, and this sustained his courage. He was assisted from his horse by his rough custodian, and was led by him into the house toward the room assigned as his prison. On his way, however, he heard expressions of astonishment and even sympathy uttered by voices which he knew to be those of negro slaves, but they were suppressed by the threats of his jailor. When they entered the room, the fellow who conducted Randolph relieved his eyes from the bandage, and then, enjoying his confusion in hideous laughter, he exclaimed:

"Ye can't see no more than ef ye had the buntin' on, I guess. Why, ye wouldn't run away ef I gived ye l'ave. Well, 'tis grate fun to see a blind man unblinded."

The sudden transition from darkness to light, even though no more than the radiance of a sorry candle flickering in a spacious room, was so distressing to the vision of the prisoner, that it seemed like a pistol flash before his eyes, and he staggered around the room as if the ball had pierced his body. When Randolph had partially recovered, the villain left the room. He did not remove the candle, nor the cords that still confined the prisoner's arms, so that though he was

enabled gradually to familiarize his eyes to light, he could not exercise his benumbed limbs in motion. His jailer, however, soon returned with some food, and invited him to eat. This was another display of his brutal irony; But Randolph met it in a manner that caused more rage than mirth, for he appeared perfectly heedless of both food and bearer, affecting to be occupied by thoughts far too absorbing to allow room for either. The philosophy of the scoundrel was not equal to this contempt. After in vain waiting for his amusement, he drew his pistol from his belt, and with a savage energy, exclaimed;

"Ef I thought ye was thinkin' o' gettin' off, I'd shoot ye like a dog. I'd ha' hanged ye hours agon' but for that Royall, that 'on't let nobody do as they ought when he's wid 'em. But ef ye can't ate wid y'ur hands behind ye, then starve," and the villain left the apartment, and Randolph heard the echo of his steps with the utmost joy.

"The name of my friend, then, is Royall," Randolph reflected, "and he must, indeed, be powerful to be able to restrain the brutal nature of a man who seems thus to crave for blood. Will he befriend me now? Will he effect my release from these barbarous marauders? Or will he fear that the exertion of such mercy would be no recommendation to the favor of such a remorseless band, which, no doubt, as one of them, he is desirous to sustain?" Thus the alternate feelings of hope and fear chased each other through his anxious thoughts, until the light of his candle died away, and he, manacled and helpless, cast himself upon the floor to relieve his troubled mind by an hour of slumber.

"Oh, Beatrice," he exclaimed, "one kind, loving word from thy sweet mouth would moisten my parched lips, and renew a courage that seems fast failing." But this fitful lamentation was soon silenced in sleep, for the body must have the refreshment of repose, if it be doomed to awaken to redoubled suffering.

In the meanwhile, the band of whom Captain Beaumont was the prisoner, had assembled in another room in consultation. One of them had learned from the chattering negroes, who had recognized Randolph, how boldly he had once defended that very house, and how he had slain the boldest robbers with his single hand. The indignation and

rage of this worthy conclave can not be described when they ascertained, by more minute inquiries, that the men who had thus fallen were their friends, and they called loudly for judgment. Royall at length stood up among these demons, and in a voice of thunder demanded silence.

"Punishment follers crime," exclaimed the enraged speaker, endeavoring to give force to his language by gesticulation; "blood fer blood, and life fer life, are Bible t'achin'. When a man takes life that he can't restore, justice demands that man's life. We've come to that point. We've a man in our hands what killed our brothers—he must die. The sojer officer must hang. Blackwell, you're his keeper—you shall be our hangman. At the dawn o' day, let him be slung to the highest tree, and we look to you for his safety till that hour."

"Ef I don't keep him safe," responded the brutal Blackwell, "why hang me instead." The noisy glee of this fearful party reëchoed through the house, and when that subsided, a drinking scene commenced, in which they almost forgot their prisoner and their vengeance.

The house in which these scenes of terror were enacted, was the lonely residence of Chalfont. He and the lovely Beatrice had retired to a distant room; but he had ordered that the villains in his house might be attended as sedulously as if they were more worthy guests, or in their unscrupulous rage, they might have fired the house. But, there was a degree of calmness about this unwilling host that was by no means indicative of a man who apprehended danger, and even Beatrice, who was in despair when she first beheld the approach of Randolph, bound and seated upon his horse, was soothed by the same anodyne which had been successful with her father.

When Randolph awoke from his brief slumbers, he found that his prison was lighted by a candle placed upon the table, and, at a short distance, somewhat in shadow, was the figure of a female. His hands were released from confinement, and as he moved them to feel assured that all was not a dream, he found that they were free from the effects of those merciless ligatures, and had been rubbed into animation by the administering angel who had so modestly retired into the shade. He leaped to his feet as soon as he believed that

all was not ideal, rushed toward the figure to whom he imagined his gratitude was due, and then, as he caught a more distinct view of her features, he paused in wonder and astonishment, exclaiming:

"Beatrice! Is it you who have unbound these hands and chafed them into life? Is it you who now enters my prison to tell me to fly from my infamous captors. Ah, I can not go. I tarry where you tarry, even though the grave awaits me. Listen with—"

"Randolph," interposed Beatrice, the tears coursing down her cheeks, "*dear* Randolph, by your remorseless captors, you are doomed to die at dawn, and it is but two short hours to that. You must fly even from me!"

"Fly?" exclaimed Randolph with a smile; "what, just as you endow me with new life. I have the strength of Hercules with which to oppose these monsters since you are here to embolden me. Hark, that is the scoundrel Blackwell, to whose especial care I am committed. He is now coming with the humane intention of preparing me for death; but, he knows not that an angel has visited my prison, and, by releasing my hands, has made me at least the coward's equal."

At this juncture a trap-door in the floor unclosed, and two persons entered the apartment. Beatrice did not seem alarmed, and Randolph was not more so, for he soon exclaimed, as he recognized one of the figures:

"What, Jasper!"

Jasper held up his finger to indicate that silence was necessary; and then Beatrice introduced her father. Mr. Chalfont shook Randolph most heartily by the hand.

"I regret that we should first meet in prison," he said, "and that that prison should be my house. But, I think by the assistance of Jasper, we shall be able to open its gates. We have but few words to exchange, but my gratitude—"

"Ah, sir," interposed Randolph, "I have a far greater boon to ask of you than you propose to grant. I ask of you a daughter, without whom life would be an endless prison."

"Beatrice, do I hear correctly?"

"Father," exclaimed the blushing Beatrice, and she fell upon his neck. The parent required no other answer, and placing his daughter's hand in that of Randolph, he said:

"May Heaven bless you!"

The impatient scout had enjoyed this scene far less than any of the party, and he now came rudely forward as if the expediency of things must dispense with ceremony.

"Captain Beaumont," he said, "it is designed to free you from these men. There is no alternative but escape. There are too many for our arms, and they are desperate and united."

"Can escape be effected?" inquired Randolph, greatly impressed with the manner of the scout, who never felt alarm without good cause.

"It can be attempted," was the laconic response, "and the first step is by this road; but be quick and silent, for you have to deal with men whose senses are wakeful even in their deepest sleep."

The trap was opened, and Randolph guided Beatrice carefully through.

"Farewell, dear Beatrice," he said; "my uncompromising leader tells me that our paths are apart for a while. I could not leave you were I not assured that you remain with better protection than I can afford."

"Tarry not another instant, dear Randolph, for you know not what danger you entail both upon yourself and others by delay."

Randolph pressed her to his heart, then rushed after the scarcely passive scout. Jasper led him to the stable, where he found his horse saddled, and Philip in waiting with another.

"Mount, cap'ain," said the impetuous scout, "or both you and I may yet be lost. Philip, you've my directions. If you pursue any other I can not save you, for that is the only road that I dare attempt to shelter."

As the last words were uttered, the horsemen dashed across a piece of open meadow into the woods beyond, and the scout watching them an instant, hastened back to the prison-room which Randolph had abandoned. He looked carefully round to be sure that nothing had been left by which the presence of visitors in the room could be detected. The severed rope still lay upon the floor. There were but two articles of furniture in the room—a chair and table. This latter article the scout tore to pieces, converting one of its rather clumsy legs into a bludgeon. Then he looked up at the window to see if day

were peeping, and listening with great attention. Presently a stealthy step was heard along the passage. Jasper knew it well. It was the messenger of death approaching one who had but an hour to live. The eyes of the scout flashed fire as he heard the hangman's hand upon the door. It was opened—all was dark and silent. The fierce Blackwell hesitated to advance. Then, as if ashamed of even this slight pause on his road of villainy, he closed the half-open door and walked into the room. The scout followed him unheard, and just as he stumbled over the fragments of the broken table he dealt him a blow with its detached leg that felled him to the floor. A slight groan attested where he lay, and that he might not recover too quickly, the scout repeated his blows upon the head of the ox-like form, and then throwing the weapon upon his worthless carcass, passed out of the room into the passage, locking the door, without removing the key. The scout hastened to a room where Beatrice and her father awaited him, in great agitation. Jasper was scarcely less excited. He did not speak, but passed through the apartment to a closet, and in a few minutes there emerged from that little closet, not Jasper the scout, but Royall the robber. This excited no terror in the hearts of either Beatrice or her father; on the contrary, they looked rather inquiringly in his face, and he, reading the intelligence of their eyes, said to Beatrice:

“He will escape,” and to Mr. Chalfont, “I have Blackwell sleeping; now for the next step. Remember, in the first fury your safety depends on keeping this room.”

Then Royall entered the room where his choice brotherhood had passed the night. They had sunk to repose beneath the effects of their potations. Some slumbered with their heads upon the drinking-bench; others had slid gently from their chairs and slept beneath the table, while a few still sat upright in their chairs, their dirty hands plunged in their dirtier pockets, as perfectly unconscious of all that passed as those who dozed recumbently. Royall resumed the place he had before occupied without disturbing any of those motley sleepers, whence in a loud voice he exclaimed:

“What, ho, comrades, awake, awake; the gray streaks o' light is app'aring i' the east—'tis break o' day: and the man

that ye ordered to be hung for the murder of our brothers should be on his way to the trees."

Before he had finished this characteristic challenge, the heads were lifted from the table, the floor was cleared of all the sleeping animals, and those who had retained their chairs opened their eyes and quickly relieved their dirty pockets of their hands. Inquiries for Blackwell were made; but, as that functionary did not appear, it was hinted that he intended to enjoy the execution by himself. This was, however, discredited, and several started to the prison to seek him. They quickly returned with the intelligence that Blackwell was found bleeding upon the floor, and the prisoner gone. It is impossible to describe the noise which then ensued, or the imprecations uttered.

They echoed throughout the house, and the terrified slaves sought the most obscure portions of the dwelling to conceal themselves from the fury of these savages. Some of the fellows rushed to the stable and reported that the prisoner's horse was gone, while others raised Blackwell to his feet, and listened while he narrated how he left the prisoner bound and found him unbound; how, taken at disadvantage and from behind, he was struck with a club which seemed to be a portion of the broken table, and how he fell and knew nothing more. Royall, finding himself alone, repaired to the prison-room, to whom Blackwell again related the occurrences of the evening. When he had examined the room and heard all the evidence that was offered, he said:

"Comrades, we mus'n't pause here in idleness. We'll ha' the pris'ner yet. He's gone toward the army, and in the saddle. His hoss can travel on that track more 'an three miles an hour. Let us start directly by the short cuts o' the woods, and we must ha' him. Go two and two, I'll take the way across the lower road alone, and Blackwell shall have a day or two to rest here. But, mind, whoever finds him hang him upon the spot. Never risk another escape like this."

Cheer after cheer was raised in honor of Royall, and the men begun to arrange their routes with haste; but Blackwell refused to be excused. He would have revenge, and seek it with the others. In a few minutes the house was clear of these abandoned rogues, although they much wanted to fire

the house as a last memento of their presence. But this Royall overruled. When quiet was restored, Royall repaired to the room where he had left the father and daughter. Again he became in costume Jasper the scout. Both Beatrice and her father expressed their gratitude. He remained that day and the following night under the apprehension that some of the unsuccessful scoundrels might possibly return and give annoyance. Toward evening Philip reappeared. He had, by a succession of short routes, conducted Randolph to a place of perfect safety, whence there was no doubt that he could reach the army. When, the next morning, Jasper prepared to quit the house on some other mission of his wandering life, Beatrice expressed her gratitude for his services; but he playfully put her on one side and said:

“The only recompense I would ask is that which you would deny me.”

Tears filled the maiden's eyes as he moved away. “I do love him deeply and tenderly, with a sisterly affection. I lean upon him as upon a brother. Alas! alas! does he love me with other than a brotherly affection?”

She retired to her own room to weep.

CHAPTER VII.

THE STORMING OF THE REDOUBTS.

THE French and American armies had now formed a junction with the forces of Lafayette, and as the two nations were represented by nearly equal numbers of men in the field, a feeling of honorable emulation had been engendered which was not unlikely to be followed by many daring displays of martial courage. When, therefore, Yorktown was so closely invested that Cornwallis could not escape by land, and it was pretty certain that De Grasse had him closely blockaded by sea, it was plain that fighting was inevitable, unless the British recoiled from the combat by capitulation. But this was **not** likely, as Cornwallis had been for some time preparing

for a different event, by throwing up advance works to impede the American progress, besides having strengthened Yorktown to the best of his ability.

No one regarded these preparations with more ardor than Captain Beaumont. He would anticipate nothing but a glorious termination of the siege, and he wished to gain his share of the laurels to be won, that they might adorn the brow of Beatrice, for although she might caution him against rashness in his enterprise, she would not fail to be proud of these qualities which the world must admire. He loved his country, too, and valued its independence, and was willing to give his life in her good cause, although life to him now was rendered doubly sweet by the rich fruition in store for him.

One evening as he sat in his tent alone, thinking of Beatrice, of home, and of the enemy in front of him, an orderly entered with a summons for him to attend the colonel. He hastened to the colonel's tent.

"Well, Randolph," said the colonel, "are you ready for action?"

"Never better disposed," replied Randolph, "even to the storming of those distant redoubts that look so frowning."

The colonel smiled, and then added:

"And your men. Are their pulses stout? For we want not feeble men for giants' work."

"They share my spirit, colonel," replied Randolph; "they think more of honor than of death, and I think I could not lead where they would refuse to follow."

"Those are the fellows, then," said the colonel, as his bright eyes sparkled with pleasure; "for desperate work requires desperate men, who are as proud of the honor of a glorious death as of a life of fame. To-morrow at dawn we storm that left redoubt; that on the right is to be entrusted to the French. My regiment is one of those selected for the task, and I would rather leave one half my men behind, than take one who would not climb that abattis or die. What matters life if we were to see the French flag run up the staff of the right redoubt and the British banner still flying upon the left? I should sink beneath the humiliation."

"It would, indeed, be a national reproach," replied Randolph, "but one that will never befall our people."

"Inspire your men with such sentiments as these and it never will," said the colonel, "but, see me again to-night, for I am engaged just now. I am anxious as to the result of this bold step, and sent to inquire the true temper of your men. We shall meet a few hours hence."

Randolph returned to his quarters, delighted with his interview. The morrow's sun was to light him to a foe where French and Americans, in separate fields, so distinct were the points of operation allotted to each, were to combat against a mutual antagonist who had so often been said to be equal to them both. The emulative courage among men in this relative position would prevent their being conquered, for he knew that his own brave fellows would rather die than yield. With a feeling of confidence that had never been more firm, he commenced his preparations for the fray; when these were completed he repaired to the colonel's tent.

"Ah, Randolph," said the colonel, grasping his hand, "I am glad that you are come. Not that there is more to communicate, except that our men seem on fire for to-morrow's carnival. It will be a fierce affair, no doubt, for we may be well assured the British will receive us well—with the same hospitable feelings which they have extended to this ravaged country. However, the day of retribution is arrived, and we will have Cornwallis and his men if the event depends on mortal courage or the skill of earthly means."

"It is the sentiment of your regiment, colonel," exclaimed the young captain, "and few of them will return to camp unless the flag of victory floats over their dauntless heads."

"Such sentiments, brave Beaumont, is victory itself," exclaimed the colonel, his eyes flashing with excitement. "It is not the sword alone that conquers, but the mind. The resolution to do renders the hand indomitable, and one great point is gained. We have resolved to take yonder redoubt, and, as our men are of our temper, we will do it."

At this moment Jasper the scout, entered. He did not perceive Randolph, and advanced toward the colonel with a smiling face and extended hand, and though Randolph was astonished at this unseemly familiarity he thought he had never beheld a more manly figure. Before he reached the colonel, however, his eagle eye glanced to the corner where

Randolph sat, almost concealed by some military trappings, and his hand was instantly withdrawn. He paused, and merely bowed, as if awaiting instructions.

"Jasper," said the colonel, in a kind voice, "I am engaged for a short period with Captain Beaumont on military matters; but, I should like to see you directly he retires." Then, as the scout bowed and retreated, the colonel continued as if in soliloquy: "He is a noble fellow. No one knows the fullness of his merits—one-half of them are even concealed from me, yet I see enough to admire him above any man whom I have ever known."

"I am his debtor, colonel," interrupted Randolph, feeling anxious to remind the colonel that he was not alone; "he once saved my life. Disguised as a villain, and acting as the most relentless of my enemies, he defeated their object to hang me in the woods, and effected my escape."

"I thank you for reminding me of your presence," observed the colonel, in some confusion, "but I am become sadly absent of late, which is not exactly a characteristic of the soldier. You spoke of Jasper. You owe him a life, and so do many others. He hides a noble nature beneath those coarse garments of the scout, and classic learning ornaments the mind which is disguised in that plebian drawl. I will not deny to you, for you have seen too much, that I love that noble boy. But, I often tell him that he was intended for an earlier age, when in the practice of knighterrantry he might have indulged his inordinate devotion to lonely wandering and adventure." Then the colonel again relapsed into meditation.

Randolph rose to depart.

"You are leaving, Randolph," said the colonel, as he rose. "Well, I will not delay you. But, mind, captain, that you place your men before the enemy so charged with fire that either life or death—as the chance of battle may determine—shall add to the glory of the regiment and to the prestige of our national fame."

Captain Beaumont quitted the colonel's tent. Near the entrance stood the scout. Randolph grasped his hand.

"I left you in fearful company when you so nobly provided for my escape," commenced the captain.

"Enough!" interposed the scout. "I have been as fortunate as yourself, and what, perhaps, is still better," he added, with some significance, "I left those in safety whom you could not linger to protect. But I have business with the colonel."

"We all owe you much," said Randolph; then, encountering a look of reproach from the scout at a renewal of the subject, he observed: "The colonel seems sad to-night?"

A piercing glance shot from the flashing eyes of the scout. "I trust," he exclaimed, "that this ephemeral feeling has not spread to his officers, for they will find that with the first bugle-sound to charge, his lion heart will so swell in his truthful breast, that he would not shrink before the club of Hercules."

The scout passed into the colonel's tent, and Randolph walked toward his quarters. The late interview, however, excited much astonishment. "What could have tempted this young and handsome man to assume the character of a scout?" he thought. "Could he voluntarily endure the hardships and perils of this desultory life from another impulse than the love of adventure, as the colonel seemed to hint? Or, was there some other trouble that drove him from society, and made the wildness of a forest life more congenial to his wounded feelings?" Randolph arrived at no conclusion; but, this mysterious man commanded both his admiration and his gratitude, and the delicate manner in which he imparted to him the pleasing intelligence that he left Beatrice in safety, proved him to be a person accustomed to the courtesies of life. But, these were not subjects for the night before a battle, and he dismissed them from his thoughts. He sat down and wrote an affectionate letter to Beatrice, and placed it near his heart, that the sacred missive might be found should he not survive the coming struggle; then, deeply affected at the nature of the occupation thus imposed upon himself, he retired to his soldier's pallet, and endeavored to obtain a few hours of sleep. But, he was obliged to accept the rest without the slumber, and, on the first stir of bustle in the camp, he leaped to his feet, fitted himself for the enterprise on hand, and left his canvas dwelling. The morning was clear and beautiful, and the

air more refreshing to his feelings than the few restless hours he had consumed upon his bed.

He responded to the summons of the drum, but quick as he was, he was almost the last at the rendezvous. Such enthusiasm prevailed that the men had anticipated the martial call. The colonel was in ecstasies at the determined conduct of his regiment. He rode among the men, cheering them with inspiring language, until he produced such an excitement through the ranks that it required all the address and tact of the minor officers to entice them to obedience without wounding their impetuous courage. Randolph could scarcely recognize in his colonel the meditative soldier of the previous night; for, although always brave and ardent, he never before exhibited such fierce energy, except in the rage of battle. It, however, inspired the men. They were formed in a square around him, in order that they might hear his parting words before the march. Not a sound was heard as he removed his hat from his head and said:

“My brave fellows—Yonder are two redoubts. Both are manned by our enemies. The honor of taking one is assigned to us—of the other to the French. They are the portals to greater victories, and must be gained. I will not return except in victory. Let us show our gallant allies that our military prowess is not to be excelled. To conquer as the antagonist of England and the rival of France is a distinction of which a Roman soldier might be proud. Yonder is my grave or our field of victory. Tell me by a cheer, officers and men, if this be your election also?”

Cheer after cheer rung through the air, and Randolph perceived the smile of satisfaction that played upon the veteran's face as he heard the clamor of his devoted men. He looked round upon the ranks, replaced his hat, and, without daring to attempt the utterance of another word, pointed toward the redoubt and moved forward.

The colonel had excited a powerful emulative feeling in the breasts of the soldiers, and their eyes were now strained toward the East in the hope that, with the first streak of light, the battle might begin. At a place of rendezvous they were halted and joined by other troops, when all waited impatiently for the light and a given signal to commence the attack.

At length a streak appeared in the eastern horizon. Every heart quivered with emotion—stout hearts as they were. There was another signal between life and death. Its fatal ascent was expected with still greater eagerness, for it was the last. Presently a rocket mounted high into the air, and before its core had burst and scattered its golden shower into the atmosphere, the colonel had only one word to utter, and the soldiers had not the patience to await another.

“Forward!” he cried, and the men dashed on in a manner that appeared to inspire those who followed with redoubled courage.

But the English were not unprepared for the attack, and the sentinels had given warning of an unusual movement in the French and American camps, at an early hour. This put them on their guard, and, as the American column advanced, they showered down upon them both grape and canister. Still, those who were unwounded and those who were but slightly injured cheered in defiance, and refused for a moment to abate their rapid advance. As they approached the enemy’s works, musketry was used, and this did more execution; but, though the brave fellows looked wistfully toward their colonel, he would not give the word to fire.

“Let them come on,” said the colonel, as he was passing Randolph, “it is only wasting cartridges and ourselves to fire on half-masked men. Randolph, see you the heads of those men as they are striving to conceal themselves in passing yonder ditch? That is some contrivance of the artful Cornwallis to attack us in the rear. Withdraw your company and watch them. If they be not too formidable, attack them, otherwise retire, keeping them well amused until I can afford you more assistance.”

Randolph withdrew his men, and, by a skillful maneuver, placed them in a wood unseen by the enemy; but he soon perceived that he was opposed to a far greater force than the colonel had imagined, and under the apprehension of a failure at such an important juncture, he refrained from showing himself, but dispatched a messenger to the colonel, explaining his position and the enemy’s numbers. He was directed instantly to retreat to the main body, and so admirably did he effect the backward movement through woods and ditches,

and so effectually did he conceal his weakness, that the enemy, dispirited at the disclosure of their plan, and believing themselves outnumbered, retraced their path toward the redoubt.

Although Randolph had not fired a shot, he found, upon his return, that they had had severe work in front of the redoubt. The assailing column had been twice repulsed; but the men were not disheartened, though their ranks were thinned. The French, it was believed, were not more fortunate, for it could be seen, as the smoke occasionally cleared, that the British flag still waved over the redoubt attacked by those allies.

The colonel had, a second time, rallied his men. Although vexed at the disaster, he had not reproached them, for the fire was so fierce as to sweep away in killed and wounded nearly one-third of his force. As Randolph turned an angle, and came in full view of the dauntless regiment, the colonel cried:

"Welcome, Randolph—welcome, Captain Beaumont! You reënforce us just in time to share our victory. Another minute and we might have snatched the laurels from your brow." Randolph gladly joined the ranks, and the men, inspirited by this addition to their failing numbers, rushed forward at the word with a lighter and more hopeful step. They were received by a deadly fire. Some fell, some would not fall, but clung to their companions, who, dead to other feelings than revenge and victory, shook the wounded off, and dashed forward with the able.

"Mount the works, boys," exclaimed Randolph, as he himself, setting the example, leaped upon the embankment. Three men followed but were instantly dispatched; a few others followed with better fortune, and these were quickly joined by others. Then a footing had been obtained, and, headed by Randolph, the valor of the men was so invincible that they could not be displaced. But Randolph found that they had scarcely more than foothold, and that, unless some desperate effort was made to secure what they had gained, they should be driven off like the previous assailants, but with incomparably greater carnage. He therefore directed all his skill to form his men, and make a charge. This he effected with great success, for, clearing the front of the redoubt for

some way, hundreds leaped into the vacant space and instantly formed. This maneuver was fatal to the besieged, and, although they still gallantly contended for their works, they were practically lost; but the colonel, experienced in the fickleness of fortune, and perceiving that the enemy still defended one-half of the redoubt with defiant valor, ordered an instant charge. In effecting this, Randolph and some of his men were separated from the rest, and, in order to escape capture, were compelled to make a slight détour. They fell in with a small party of the enemy. Equally matched, Randolph determined to force his way; but, there was no less resolution in their opponents to withstand them. Some skirmishing commenced between the men, but the officers, more intent on chivalry than escape, engaged fiercely with their swords, when a tall figure rushed between them, striking their swords down with a hickory cudgel.

"Gen'lemen, would ye add t' th' carnage o' the day by cuttin' each other's throats when the battle's over?" Then, whispering to the British officer, he said: "Anither minit and you're a prisoner."

"Sir, I am warned that my liberty is in jeopardy if I remain," said the Englishman, addressing Randolph; "at any other time I should be happy to renew our intimacy."

"To-night, at ten, near here," said the impetuous young Virginian.

"As near as I dare come without risking the fate of André, you may be sure of me," replied the officer, and both parties left the ground. As Randolph retired, a heavy, brutal-looking man emerged from a hiding-place. He bent his fist in a threatening manner and exclaimed:

"I know you, and I'll ha' my revenge. The rope is made that'll hang you."

"Why did you prevent my combat with the Briton, Jasper?" asked Randolph of the scout, for it was he who had rushed between them. "We are sworn antagonists, and I see no impropriety in the duel which you so inopportunately stopped."

"Be warned by me, Captain Beaumont, and do not meet him," said the scout, with great earnestness. "There are more reasons why you should not slay each other than why you should."

"Though I know him not," replied Randolph, "I must meet him."

"Had he known who you are, he would not meet you, nor would he have drawn his sword," said Jasper; "but, your face is black with powder, and his is not more white. Let the meeting rest."

"I can not thus risk my honor or my name," replied the captain.

"Then I will mar the plot, for it shall not be," exclaimed the scout, in a voice of authority and absoluteness, that was by no means pleasing to his hearer.

Their conversation, however, was interrupted by a breathless messenger, who, addressing the scout, said:

"The colonel is severely wounded; but, before he will submit to the examination of the surgeon, he insists upon seeing you. He fell in the last charge, with the cry of victory on his lips."

The scout was greatly shocked, and supported himself for an instant upon his hickory club, then hastened after the messenger at his greatest speed. As Randolph followed, he thought that none knew the cost of victory but those who paid its price.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE COLONEL'S NARRATIVE.

THE scout reached the tent of the colonel, to find him greatly exhausted; but his presence seemed to inspire him with new vigor. The colonel grasped his hand and retained it tightly, while a smile played upon his ghastly visage.

"I fell," he said, "with the cry of victory ringing in my ears—a privilege denied to hundreds of my poor fellows. In the morning, I enjoyed all the vigor of manhood—to-night, I am on the brink of dissolution. Such is the mutability of human affairs. I want your support while Galen examines and dresses my wound, although I have but little doubt that my injury is mortal. But you, Jasper, must not leave me

while I live. I have much to relate—much to disclose—and this portion of my remaining duty requires promptitude. Galen," he continued, as the doctor entered, "I yield myself to your hands, now that Jasper is by me; but, I have a presentiment of my fate. I fear that my career on earth is ended."

Almost the same sentence could be read in the visage of the doctor, as he proceeded, with great care and tenderness, to examine the wound. His grave apprehensions were soon confirmed, and announced by his graver manner.

"Galen, I am doomed—is it not so?" asked the colonel, as he gazed in the doctor's face.

"Colonel," replied the doctor, and a tear glistened in his eye, "you can not recover. The wound is mortal, beyond a question."

"How long can I live, doctor?" the colonel inquired, displaying more anxiety than when he had put the question of life and death.

"Possibly, two days," replied the doctor."

"Thank you for this candor, worthy Galen," said the colonel. "I am content—I am even grateful, and I will endeavor to show my appreciation of so much mercy by rendering that justice which is due to Jasper."

"Father of my boyhood—protector of my youth, and faithful guide," exclaimed the scout, as, upon his knees beside the colonel's couch, he pressed his clammy hand, "there is no debt of justice due from you to me."

"I did not mean, dear boy," said the colonel, "that I have to atone for any injustice practiced upon you, for I have loved you too well for that; but, that I have certain revelations to disclose in reference to your family—or rather ours—which, if I were to carry with me to the grave, would do you a great wrong."

"Then we are related?" asked the anxious scout.

"In the degree of uncle and nephew," replied the colonel.

"Thank Heaven that I am allied to such noble blood," ejaculated the scout. "Had I known this grateful truth before these closing hours, I would have toiled to have won your love by a more steadfast duty; but, alas, the knowledge has come too late, and left me but in penitence for the past."

"Bless you, my boy," said the colonel, solemnly, placing his hand upon the head of the still kneeling scout. "May the blessing of a dying man be upon you."

What more the colonel would have said was stifled by emotion. The sobs of both were audible, and for some minutes such powerful thoughts as have no language but in suffering, convulsed their breasts. The colonel was the first to regain composure.

"Prepare, to hear, dear boy," said the colonel, "for I am prepared to speak."

"Uncle, another hour," replied the scout. "You are too weak—too affected."

"Dear nephew," said the colonel, "my hours of life are few, and my hours of reason may be fewer; they must not be idly used." Then, addressing the doctor, who had witnessed this scene, the colonel resumed: "Galen, my worthy friend, do not withdraw. Hear my narrative. It will disclose the adventures of my life. We will have no secrets from your ear." But the doctor was the most affected of the group. He only replied by shaking his head, and, concealing his face in his handkerchief, he quitted the tent, exclaiming, almost inarticulately: "Too much, too much!"

After another pause, induced by the agitation of the compassionate doctor, the colonel commenced his narrative:

"The name of Storm, by which I am now known, is one that I have assumed, not for the purpose of hiding any shame, but that I might be able to prosecute certain family inquiries in concealment. My father was a man of wealth and condition, and emigrated from England to this country. It was not in disgust with his native land that he became a resident of this; but was in order to carry out some great mercantile projects in which he had embarked. I was the youngest of three sons, and was but two years of age when I reached these shores. At the ninth year of my age, I was sent to England for my education, whither my brothers had preceded me two years earlier. It was the first event of my calm and happy life, and I well remember how full my heart was of hope when it was told me by my mother that I was to join my paternal playmates. I crossed the great sheet of waters, and marveled as I went at the wonders of navigation. The

captain of the vessel, a kind, good man, amused with my pertinent inquiries, begun to show me the means by which the mariner found his way, and related such curious anecdotes of distant countries, that he planted in my mind a far greater desire to roam the earth than study. I reached England. My brothers received me with delight. They had become tall, manly boys, and very unlike the brothers from whom I had parted, and I only knew them by the fluttering at my heart. They called me their little brother; they assisted me with my lessons, instructed me in all their games, and defended me against the tyranny of the larger boys. Thus I passed several years of happiness. At length directions were received for Sidney, my eldest brother, to return. Although I had grown much taller, he still called me little Charley, and the boys, one-half my height and age, from an imitative feeling, did the same. I loved both him and my brother Alfred, and regarded them as much my guardians as my brothers. To be deprived of the elder of these brothers was a deep affliction, and his departure sunk into my heart. I became an altered boy. My studies were prosecuted as before, but, when the hours of recreation came, I retired to solitude, and thought only of my loss. In vain Alfred endeavored to withdraw me from this morbidness. I listened to his kind expostulations, and always promised amendment. I knew not, until I returned home, how much I owed to the single-hearted and considerate conduct of this dear brother; but then, I learned that when he, too, was summoned home to enter upon a more active life, he wrote to ask permission to remain with me, for that another separation might not only endanger my health, but my life. My father, with reluctance, granted his request, or, rather, the worthy merchant yielded to the least mischievous necessity.

“When, however, my parents thought that I had remained a sufficient period, and that my education was completed, and it was intimated to Alfred and myself that we were to return to America at the ensuing vacation, my former alacrity returned. I revisited the play-ground, and became suddenly one of the most buoyant of those who gamboled there. I abandoned solitude, and the last two months of my residence in England were full of joy, merriment, and hope. We sailed, followed

by the regrets of our young friends, and joined a group of passengers, whose hearts, like our own, were all the lighter that the prow of our ship was pointed homeward. But, calamity met us on the threshold of our father's house. We were informed, upon our arrival, of our dear mother's death. Death! It seemed to be impossible. The ghastly specter had never appeared among our family, and we could not realize his savage presence now, when, after years of absence, we hoped to be folded to that dear mother's heart. But it was true. Our father received us affectionately, but with tears streaming from his eyes, in the adjoining room to that in which our mother, cold and insensible to all around, lay in that narrow prison in which she was to be committed to the vault. It is impossible to conceive the poignancy of our grief. The house was one of impressive sorrow.

"I was seventeen at my mother's death; my brother Sidney was twenty-one. He was engaged to be married, and had become more thoughtful and reserved than when at school, and I sometimes felt, when I remarked the reluctance with which he parted with his money, was rather avaricious. But, he was ever kind to me. The lady to whom Sidney was to be married, was on a visit at Philadelphia. We resided at New York. Her parents had a handsome residence not far from ours, and it was said that the young lady was about to return, and then the marriage would take place. This was six months after our poor mother's death. The lady returned. I thought that I had never beheld human nature in such perfection, and yet as unaffected as she was beautiful. I was charmed with her, and thought my brother Sidney the most fortunate man beneath the sun. I visited her often, and was received always with a smile. My brother saw the constancy of my attention, and did not discourage it—nay, he would sometimes, when sitting with our father and Alfred, remark upon the romantic devotion existing between me and Beatrice. I suffered some confusion, but as his usual kindness always succeeded these remarks, I regarded them as playful, though painful sallies.

"One day, as I sat with Beatrice, examining a folio of new engravings of considerable value, she placed before me a female head, saying: 'Is not that very beautiful?' 'Those who

have not seen you, Beatrice, might pronounce it so,' I replied, 'but, as I am not of that number, I can pass such features without admiration.' She paused a moment. I saw a blush upon her cheek, as if it were the fruit of some emotion; but, it was conquered, and she replied: 'But you are beautiful, too, Charley, and I have in vain searched among these heads of men for one I like as well as yours.' 'Oh, Beatrice,' I exclaimed, 'I wish I was as handsome as my brother Sidney, for then you might have loved me.' A faintness instantly came over her, and she sunk back upon the sofa. I feared that I had done this mischief. I reproached myself aloud for my imprudence. I seized a scent-jar that stood upon the mantel, and endeavored to revive her with its perfumes, and when I perceived that she was recovering, I, in my impetuosity, threw myself at her feet and implored her pardon. She raised her head and bowed it toward mine, and I knew by a tear that fell from her fair cheek to mine, that her heart was not freer from agony than my own. 'Imprudent, thoughtless,' she commenced, in a tone without reproach; but, that instant the door opened, and my brother Sidney entered. He paused in astonishment. 'Beatrice,' he exclaimed, 'and little Charley, too!' Beatrice, with a spasmodic effort, seized my hands, and raised me from my knees, that I might infer the pardon, she could not speak, and then, staggering to the door near which we were, she disappeared, while I and Sidney occupied the room.

"My brother did not attempt to detain or follow Beatrice. He sat down upon the couch from which she had risen, and placing me beside him, said, 'Charley, I never knew you guilty of deception or untruth: tell me what has occurred?' I related every circumstance as minutely as I have done to you, repressing only the tear which had fallen from the cheek of Beatrice upon mine, and the manner in which I had risen from my knees. 'Poor boy,' he said, when he had heard my explanation, as if he had been speaking to the little Charley of his school-boy days, 'you have been too much with Beatrice, for your peace. Speak to Alfred or our father upon the subject, and they will counsel you. But, let us walk into the air, which will sooth your agitation.' We walked for some time, and he, in his kindness, employed every means to

impress upon my mind that he was well satisfied that I intended him no wrong, without referring directly to the subject.

“The next morning I applied to my father to be permitted to accompany a vessel of his own, which was about to leave New York for the Mediterranean. He was averse to this at first, but yielded to my solicitation. It was to sail in a few days. Of this I was glad, for, as I had resolved to see the lovely Beatrice no more, every hour seemed to me an age, while I remained in the city where she lived. Alfred used every effort to dissuade me from the project; but I convinced him how it would be death for me to stay, and he expostulated no longer. The day arrived. The trim vessel, with her bent sails and merry mariners, was ready for the sea, and Sidney had ordered the captain to select such extra stores as were suitable to the owner's son. My father, much aged since my mother's death, presented me with a letter of credit for ten thousand dollars. Against this munificence I expostulated, for he had, a short time before, divided the property of my mother among his three sons, although he was entitled to the interest for his life. The property yielded to me six thousand dollars, and I wanted no more; but his generosity was not to be denied, and I had no alternative but submission. Sidney furnished the vessel with every thing to make my voyage pleasant; Alfred had conveyed a library on board, and one fair hand had painted a bunch of forget-me-nots upon a field of black velvet, which she formed into a writing-case. I have it still. The colors are unfaded, and so is the donor's memory in my breast. The parting came. It was one of the trying moments of my life. Sidney threw his arms round my neck, and in scarcely audible words, said: ‘Poor little Charley.’ Alfred embraced me, but could not speak a word. And my noble father drew me to his heart, and sobbed out, ‘God bless you, boy—God bless you!’ Even the seamen wept, and I fell upon the deck, insensible for hours to all things but my sorrow.

“I was not the only passenger. There was a gentleman on board belonging to the French army, an earnest lover of his profession. As soon as I recovered from my extreme dejection, the captain introduced us, hoping to divert me from

my melancholy seclusion. At first, I rather repelled than encouraged his advances; but he seemed to penetrate my cause of sorrow, and that it required indulgence, and he treated my moodiness with remarkable forbearance. This soon changed my habits, and I associated more with him, until we became inseparable. He had been on a visit to some friends in America; but war having ensued in his absence, he was hastening home to join his regiment. He spoke with enthusiasm of a military life—its glory and renown. I listened to his teachings with admiration, and became a convert to his principles. He was my bosom friend. I related to him my history, and that I had no especial object in travel, but to bury my grief in the activity of life.

“With steady winds, and little boisterous weather, we reached Marseilles before the captain anticipated. I had my property landed, and, after taking leave of the captain and his mariners, I proceeded to Paris, where Le Fevre (the name of my new friend), assured me that he could procure me a commission. He succeeded, and in a few months we were companions in the same regiment. We were soon in active service, and I found that, in his enthusiasm, my friend Le Fevre had forgotten to relate the hardships of the camp, which I, as a subaltern officer, found far more difficult to overcome than the enemy. Indeed, I must confess that in all our service, I never heard my worthy friend, Le Fevre, now that theory could be compared with practice, speak with half the enthusiasm of the military profession as he was wont to do upon the ocean. For three years we fought side by side, until we each obtained the rank of major, and at the end of the war were colonels of our regiments. During all this time I had not received a letter from America. I knew that some must have been forwarded—that my brothers and my father loved me, and would not have preserved this frightful silence; still, I could obtain nothing, and, as my regiment was about to be disbanded, I determined to return home.

“My commission was conferred in the assumed name of Storm, and, under that distinction, I engaged my passage in the good ship *La Belle France*, from Toulon for New York. I took leave of my dear friend, Le Fevre, and without any

adventure worthy recording, reached my destination, though the sluggish craft had detained us three months on the ocean. I landed. With timid steps I approached my father's house. Five years had made no change in the family mansion, but I feared, as I ascended those well-known steps to the entrance door, that the same length of time had made a far greater inroad upon its chief inhabitant. A servant soon answered my summons at the door, and, full of hope and gladness, I advanced. The servant was surprised, and a gentleman who just entered the hall from an inner room, came forward and asked my pleasure. 'My pleasure in my father's house,' I responded, 'is to see my father.' I spoke with a show of anger; but the gentleman did not resent it. He seemed to fathom my ignorance of events, and ushered me into an adjoining apartment. A lady rose upon my entrance; but she was unknown to me, and the furniture was equally unfamiliar. A deadly sickness at heart seized me. 'My father,' I exclaimed, and fell insensible upon the floor. When I revived strange faces stood around me, white and black, administering specifics. I felt alone in the world, and groaned in the deep anguish of my heart. I feared to hear more then, but requested to be conveyed to a hotel. The following morning the occupant of my poor father's house called upon me. I was more composed, and from him I learned that my father was dead, that Sidney had married Beatrice, the beautiful and good, and that Alfred had been united to the niece of a wealthy Virginia planter, and quitting New York for England, had not returned again to the city. But, the cup of sorrow was not yet emptied. Beatrice, too, was in the tomb. That angel of earth had winged her course to heaven and had left Sidney with two cherubs, the models of herself. My brother Sidney, distressed beyond all consolation at this calamity, had abandoned New York, and no one knew the place of his abode.

"In my agony of soul my first determination was to return to my friend Le Fevre, I felt so desolate and alone; but, I subsequently resolved to seek those beloved associates of my youth in the land where I believed they lived. I paid my devotions at the tombs of my father and of Beatrice, and prayed over their hallowed dust that, if their pure spirits had the power to guide me, they would lead me to my brothers. Then

I commenced my pilgrimage. I visited every city and hamlet of the States, and toiled through its wild and untrodden forests, but I could not find the gems that I had lost. They seemed further hidden from me than those dear moldering relics in the grave.

“One evening as I was passing through one of the numerous forests of this State, a piercing shriek met my ear. It was an unusual sound in these wilds, and I was alarmed. I was on horseback, and unslinging my rifle from my back, prepared for any emergency that might occur. I hastened toward the sound, which was several times repeated, when, just at the point where the wide avenue through which I was galloping tapered to a narrow path, a boy about four years of age rushed forth, followed by an Indian. The cries proceeded from this little fellow. I cried out in order to stop the unequal chase, and reined in my horse. The Indian paused, and prepared to resent this interference by bringing his gun to bear upon my heart. I was never behind in matters of defense, and in an instant had my rifle at my shoulder. There was the least perceptible difference in the reports of the two pieces; but I knew the unerring truth of mine, and when the smoke cleared off the body of the savage was to be seen motionless upon the pathway. I remained unharmed. The poor boy had ceased his cries. He had paused between the Indian and myself—the belligerent bullets had passed above his head—but when he saw that his enemy had fallen, and that I had triumphed, he rushed toward me, clambered up my leg, upon my horse, throwing his tiny arms around my neck, exclaiming, in his childish language, but which found its way the more readily to my heart; ‘Oh, take me from the Indians!’ I kissed and fondled the poor little refugee, and promised him protection, and, while he still pressed his soft cheek against my face, I reloaded my rifle, that I might not be taken at disadvantage. I then asked my little *protégé* his name, and with a distinctness that could leave me no doubt of its truthfulness, he replied, ‘Jasper Chalfont.’ Again and again I strained that sweet boy to my breast. I had been chosen as the instrument in preserving the son of Beatrice from destruction. I thought the spirit of that immortal angel would ever hover over me as the guardian of her child. This compensated me for all my troubles.

I now saw that in my past sorrow I was but pursuing the road to happiness—that there was a Providence in my great affliction. It was almost dark before it occurred to me to ask the little fellow where he lived. He then pointed with his finger to almost every open place between the trees, and I soon found that he was by no means an accredited pioneer, so I resolved to select a resting-place for the night. I descended from my horse, and taking the bridle from his head, allowed him to seek his food, for he ever returned at my call. We partook of such refreshments as I had, and then with great care I folded little Jasper in my blanket, and placing him upon a soft bed of moss, he quickly fell into deep slumber. I reclined beside him, but not in sleep. I indulged in a greater luxury than that—in profound and happy thought. The stars never seemed so brilliant, nor the heavens so clear, and I thus watched and meditated from darkness until day.

“When Jasper awoke we breakfasted, and after that, remounting our willing steed, I followed innumerable trails that Jasper pointed out as leading to his house. At the end of the day I abandoned the fruitless search. Not one of the settlers in that vicinity knew the child, and it became evident that the Indian had borne the boy from a distance—for what purpose I could not divine. After another night’s sojourn in the woods, I repaired to Philadelphia, in the vicinity of which city I occupied a house, where Jasper and I have since resided. I guarded that dear boy as a miser would his treasure, and he returned my solicitude and care with a devotion and obedience that made me proud of the son of Beatrice. I was his only guide and tutor; and I stored his mind with such knowledge as had been laid up in mine. When this war commenced, a war of justice and of right, I felt that it was beneath the dignity of a resident soldier to withhold the assistance of his sword. I offered my service to the republic and was appointed to the regiment in which I die. Jasper was then seventeen, tall, handsome, and his mind well stored with knowledge—and during the thirteen years that had transpired since I rescued him in the forest, he had never given me cause for a moment’s anger. I quitted my happy home for Boston to join my regiment. Jasper and I had never parted. To me it was a renewal of the scene on board the vessel, with feelings

perhaps, if possible, more intense. Jasper was left to the care of the two faithful servants who had attended us for years. Two months later the devoted boy appeared at my quarters. He had made his way over the entire distance separating Philadelphia from Boston to meet his guardian, who could not reproach him, in the indulgence of his love. Since that period Jasper has become a wanderer. The old home does not possess its wonted attractiveness, and although the same servants who still remain in charge, strive to make it a place of happiness to its younger tenant, a piece of furniture is wanted there to effect this end that is now crumbling to the dust. I have retained the name of Storm since I first assumed it; but I am really Charles Chalfont. Jasper was known as my ward, and the simple people who served us were content with that. In military circles and the camp he was known merely as 'Jasper the Scout,' and in that character, and in various disguises, this noble fellow has done far more good than Charles Storm in his rank as colonel."

The colonel now became greatly exhausted. Jasper, from the moment he began to penetrate into that portion of the narrative which related to the mystery of himself, was deeply affected, and many times sobbed aloud.

"Dear uncle," said Jasper, with emotion, "I am not fatherless. Sidney Chalfont lives."

"What!" exclaimed the colonel, as if fresh vigor had been instilled into that ebbing life; "is such a mercy possible? Have you found him, Jasper?"

"Deep in the woods, not many miles distant, Sidney Chalfont lives the life of a recluse—his only companions his daughter Beatrice and a few slaves."

"Jasper, for no other purpose could I spare you from my side," exclaimed the colonel. "Seek them—seek your father and your sister—tell my dear brother 'little Charley' awaits him—but that he only pauses on the threshold of the grave."

"Uncle, dear uncle, I go," replied the agitated Jasper. "You, who never by word or deed did injury to man, have something to forgive this brother, and he and his son and daughter shall together ask it of you."

As Jasper rushed from the tent, the doctor entered.

CHAPTER IX.

INTO THE LION'S PAWS.

RANDOLPH, despite the warning of the scout, resolved to meet his adversary. He knew not his antagonist, but he belonged to a hostile camp, and as the combat which they had commenced upon the field had been interrupted by the pertinacity of the scout, he certainly saw no impropriety in renewing it later in the day. At least he felt bound in honor to support his word, and with this chivalric determination he started for the ground. The night was clear and beautiful, but was by no means noiseless, for the victors, with boisterous exultation were celebrating their conquest. The wounded had mostly been removed from the field, but the killed, in their awful, solemn, and eternal slumber, lay cold and pallid upon their gory couches. These breathless heroes were for to-morrow's grave.

Randolph remembered the taunting rejoinder of the British soldier that he would meet him as near their lines as would shield him from André's fate, and therefore resolved, in order to preserve him from jeopardy, to pass outside the American pickets. He was prepared with the necessary countersign, and passed the sentinel. He had not proceeded far when he was accosted by a powerful fellow.

"I'm sent for you," he said, in a rough, repulsive voice. "There's a quiet place down here. Come," and he beckoned with his finger, and then walked forward as silently as if he were fearful of the reverberation of his footsteps.

Impressed with the feeling that no third person could have any knowledge of his object but one duly instructed to receive him, he did not hesitate to follow, although he thought that the officer whom he sought might have selected from the British army a more unexceptionable herald. He followed to an obscure portion of the defenses, where he passed a sentinel, who, fatigued by the efforts of the day, had, for the indulgence of an hour's repose, thus risked the safety of the

whole army. By some abrupt turn in the pathway, which was intersected with numerous trees and bushes, he became separated from his guide. He halted a few minutes in expectation of his return, as he feared to venture upon such a tangled way without instruction. The fellow did not return, and Randolph, when he reflected upon the dangerous position in which he stood, could not but apprehend treachery. He quickly resolved to retrace his steps and glide past the guilty sentinel into safety : but the fellow had resumed his musket and his wakefulness, and paced to and fro his walk with the diligence of one who had never failed in duty. Fearful of detection, and infuriated at the perfidy practiced upon him, he suddenly heard steps advancing from behind, when just as he was attempting to conceal himself behind a tree, he was seized by the relieving guard. He was a prisoner in the enemy's camp !

The following morning the British camp rung with the intelligence that an American officer had been detected in their camp. Exasperated at the defeat of the previous day, and the occupation of both their redoubts, they cried aloud for revenge for André. The officers, however, were more temperate, and at an early hour one of high rank was dispatched from headquarters to obtain the particulars of the arrest, and to learn the rank of the prisoner. Randolph had nothing to conceal. He related the facts ; but he saw that they were received with considerable doubt, and that the suspicions of the officer were increased by his capture having occurred on the evening of the day when a portion of their defenses had been carried, and when information as to the remaining capabilities of the British might be peculiarly acceptable to the Americans. Randolph, perceiving by the gravity of the examining officer that his situation was one of great peril, requested to be allowed to write to his commanding officer.

“ If this permission were granted,” replied the officer, “ there would be some doubt as to the nature of your communication.”

“ I will pledge my honor that it shall refer to nothing but my defense and my family and friends,” replied Randolph.

“ But you must remember your position,” observed the officer.

"Sir, it is one of great cruelty and hardship," replied Randolph, with indignation, "and is attributable to the dastardly conduct of one of your own officers, who conceals himself behind the mystery."

"If I have spoken a word to hurt your feelings or provoke your anger, sir, I trust you will accept my apologies," replied the officer, with courtesy and feeling. "If you will leave your letter unsealed, I will undertake to pass it; but, I dare not promise more."

"I accept your courtesy, sir, and regret I spoke so warmly," replied Randolph; then, as the officer bowed, and still lingered in the prison-room, he added, "do you judge my position to be one of much danger, sir?"

"Unquestionably I do," replied the officer, "and if you have any means of disproving any circumstance that may be attempted to be proved, I would urge you to prepare yourself. You will have justice, but I scarcely dare encourage you to hope for much indulgence. Pardon me, sir, but are you not known to Major Knowlton? I think I have heard him name you, as having rendered him great service in the moment of considerable peril. He is highly esteemed at headquarters, and his influence might turn the tide of your affairs if he feels that you have a shadow of right."

"The name of Major Knowlton is unknown to me, sir," replied Randolph, "and even if I had rendered him a service, which I have not, I could not ask him to employ his interest in behalf of one whom he may not think wholly guiltless."

The officer's task was completed; he bowed and retired, and Randolph was alone. He was not less apprehensive of his peril than his visitor, and he resolved to follow his advice and adopt such means for his defense as were within his power. Jasper was acquainted with the name of his antagonist, and it was necessary to obtain that; and he believed that he could direct him in the detection of the scoundrel who had enticed him within the lines. Thus he resolved to apply to the scout, through his colonel, who, though wounded, would see the letter placed in the proper hands. He wrote thus:

"Jasper, my good friend, I disdained your warning, and am prisoner in the British camp. I am here in the character of spy. The soldiers thirst for my blood, and cry out, within the

hearing of my prison, 'Remember Andre. Revenge, revenge!' though there is no more affinity in our cases than that of a guilty and a guiltless man. I am ignorant of the name of the officer I was to meet, and he has not the candor nor the justice to avow himself. He is known to you. He is indispensable to my exculpation. The man who enticed me within the British lines I did not then recognize, or I would have shot him on the spot; but I since remembered him as the fellow whom you relieved from the exquisite pleasure of hanging me in the woods—a gratification he desires to yield to my present captors—that darkest of villains, Blackwell. Can he be drawn into the light? A court-marshal will be summoned, perhaps to-day, and you know how rapidly it decides and executes. I apply to you with an ill-grace after having rejected the benefit of your caution; but I can not die without an effort to live, although the only exertion I am permitted to make is the writing of this letter. I commit the rest to you.

"Let my position be made known to my dear father. He may assist you; but it must be concealed from Beatrice, for I dare not think how frightfully it might affect her.

"Farewell, good Jasper. RANDOLPH.

"To Colonel Storm, west redoubt American camp."

This letter finished, Randolph delivered it into the hands of his custodian, a young lieutenant.

"Have you received any instructions in reference to this letter?" he asked. "It is unsealed, and open to inspection if desired."

"I have, sir," replied the lieutenant, "I am aware of its importance. It shall be delivered within an hour. I have a carrier in readiness."

Randolph thanked him, and the next minute a horse was heard to gallop from the prison door.

CHAPTER X.

IT IS I!

WHILE Randolph was, with a fatal persistency, guided into the meshes of his foes, the young scout, quitting the bedside of the dying colonel, was rushing through the lonely woods to claim a father and sister, and to urge a repentant parent

to seek forgiveness of a dying brother, that his prayer of penitence might the more cheerfully be heard by God.

It was just midnight when Jasper reached the lonely Chalfont dwelling. The tenants had been for many hours in slumber, and when they were aroused by his violent knocking at the door, his summons was replied to by a cry of terror from the slaves. The incidents which these poor, simple people had lately witnessed, in this secluded house, made them apprehensive of new horrors in this disturbance. Mr Chalfont, however, was at home, and he soon demanded, from the window of his sleeping-room, who thus claimed his hospitality.

"It is I—Jasper the scout," was the reply.

"Welcome, friend Jasper; I'll be with you in a minute," said the old man. He then proceeded to silence the timid slaves—at least their fears if not their clatter, and thence to the door to admit the impatient scout.

"Come with me to your room," exclaimed the scout, as he entered and closed the door, "I have wondrous news. There has been a great victory."

"We have heard of it, friend Jasper," replied Chalfont, exultingly.

"Yes, that is great," said the scout, "but I mean a victory over mystery—over concealment—where a brother, after years of travel, has found what he had lost, and a son has found a father and a sister."

"Jasper," said the old man, placing his hand upon his arm, "take a few hours' rest. The joy of this great victory has excited your brain."

"Yes, my brain is heated," said the scout, placing his hand upon his burning forehead, "but I can not rest. We must hasten to the dying colonel—you, I, and Beatrice!"

"Jasper," said Chalfont, now still more alarmed; "be calm, my friend, be calm. This victory has disturbed your mind."

"It has—it has," exclaimed the scout. "But listen," and when he had drawn down the old man's ear he whispered: "I have found an owner for our treasure—our trust is ended!"

The terror of the father was completed. He felt that the strong mind of the scout had been affected by some powerful cause; but, before he could make any further observation, Beatrice entered. She had risen from her couch in the

general disquiet, and when she heard that the tumult had been occasioned by the arrival of the scout, she thought to humorously congratulate him upon the equivocal honor of his midnight visit. When she entered the room, however, the scout leaped from his chair, and seizing her hand and pressing it with ardor to his lips, he exclaimed :

“ Prepare for a journey, Beatrice. We must all go to the dying colonel.” Then placing his hand upon his breast, he continued, with much agitation : “ I have much to say, Beatrice—much to declare—but, although it is in my heart, I can not speak it.”

Beatrice was not less astounded than her father at this extraordinary conduct in one whose kind consideration, gentleness and respect ever had been the theme of her admiration. Still, she saw that he was worn and haggard, and despite the extravagance of his language, the only expression upon her countenance was kindness and sympathy. But, Chalfont again urged him to retire to rest.

“ Rest !” repeated the scout ; “ shall I think of rest when I am instructed to conduct you to ‘ little Charley.’ ”

“ ‘ Little Charley !’ ” exclaimed Chalfont, as he staggered to a chair. “ My brother, my dear brother, is he discovered ?”

“ *He is !*” replied the scout.

“ Jasper, I did you injustice. I thought you frantic, but, I am the frantic man,” said Chalfont, deeply agitated. “ My brain is on fire—my heart is full—and I know not whether shame or love is the stronger feeling ; but, Beatrice, we will go where Jasper leads.”

“ Stay, Beatrice,” said the scout, “ I have more to unfold.” Then, addressing the parent he asked : “ You had a son ?”

“ Ah,” replied the father, “ you freshen up the sorrows of my heart to lessen my momentary happiness. Yes, Jasper, I had a son, the pride of my life, but he was abducted by the Indians.”

“ Fa—,” ejaculated the scout ; then instantly suppressing the word he had so nearly spoken, he continued : “ friend, *he* is found !”

“ Where ! where ! not my own boy ?” exclaimed the father.

“ My brother,” exclaimed Beatrice ; “ my brother found ! Oh Jasper, is this true

"He was found in the arms of 'little Charley.'"

"What!" exclaimed the agitated father, "those two found in each other's arms? Did that great Power whose footstool is the world, instruct the infant to rush from the guilty father to the injured uncle and rest in his bosom until the work of repentance should be achieved?"

"Father," exclaimed the scout, as the tears flowed down his cheeks, "*I* am that son! Beatrice, I am that brother. I come straight from that dear uncle's arms to yours."

Father, son and daughter fell into each other's arms, their hearts so charged with feeling at this divine restoration that they could not speak, and, in the fullness of their joy, they marveled why they had not before perceived that Jasper, the worthy Jasper, was the brother and the son.

That night, in defiance of cold, and wind, and dampness, lighted only by the glittering stars, the Chalfont family hastened through the forest to their dying relative. Jasper and his father, armed with rifles, walked, one on each side of the horse which carried the gentle Beatrice, and as they pursued their course, Jasper related many of the particulars of his uncle's life, by which he hoped to lessen the anxiety of his father. He spoke, too, of the recent battle, and of the undaunted conduct of the colonel, and he did not fail to extol the bravery and gallant conduct of Randolph, by which, although Beatrice shuddered at the danger to which he had been subjected, she felt that her brows were graced with the laurels that he had won.

As the travelers approached the camp, they became more silent and more sad. The awful reflection of Sidney Chalfont, that he was about to be restored to a long-lost brother, and separate from him eternally, almost in the same hour, was most agonizing. The gentle Beatrice, too, recoiled from the dreadful thought, and felt acutely for both herself and father. Jasper, on whom so much of his uncle's love had been lavished, now felt that his dear relative was summoned to another life, at the very moment that this was becoming more treasured by him. Though thus meditative, the hands of this devoted trio frequently met and exchanged the grasp of love.

When the camp fires came in view, and lighted the ghastly

field where friend and foe slept side by side, Jasper left the saddle of his sister, and marched in front, that he might alone respond to the challenge of the watchful sentinels. Shortly after they had passed the American lines, and were proceeding in the direction of the colonel's tent, they were met by an orderly, who stated to Jasper that he had been posted there to inform them that the colonel had been removed to a comfortable home at a short distance, to which he was appointed to conduct them. This was welcome intelligence to Jasper, for not only did he hope that the colonel was strong to be thus removed, but he had been wondering what accommodation could be afforded Beatrice in the narrow limits of a soldier's tent. When they reached the colonel's quarters, Jasper instantly sought the doctor, and was informed that his patient had suffered no inconvenience from the removal, and that he was then sleeping. Rooms were assigned to Beatrice and her father, and the latter awaited in intense suffering the approaching interview.

The sleep of the colonel was long and refreshing, and when Jasper entered the room alone, he beckoned him to his side.

"What news, my dear boy?" he asked, anxiously.

"All is disclosed, dear uncle," replied Jasper, "and my father awaits an interview in the adjoining room."

"Admit him, Jasper," exclaimed the colonel, "that our old affection may be renewed before I die."

Jasper led his father to the door of his uncle's room. Chalfont staggered with emotion, and when the door was opened, he entered, and, without a word, fell at the bedside of his brother. Jasper closed the door. The interview was too sacred for human eyes, and for two hours those brothers remained in uninterrupted intercourse. Then Sidney came forth, and leaning over Jasper's shoulder, as he sat silently alone, he said:

"Jasper, your uncle desires to see Beatrice."

"Had not that meeting be better deferred until he has taken a few hours' repose, my father?" asked Jasper.

"Your uncle wishes it," replied the father, "I can not deny him, nor can you."

Jasper led his sister into his uncle's room.

"Beatrice," exclaimed the colonel, in amazement and

agitation, as she advanced, "can the grave give up its dead?"

"My uncle," exclaimed Beatrice. "Oh, my beloved uncle!"

"Ah," said the colonel, "that admonishes me that you are the daughter. But, never did I behold such resemblance. To see you is to cheer my heart, and you must promise, Beatrice, not to leave me until I die. The duty may be severe, but it will not be of long duration."

"Dear uncle," replied Beatrice, with great emotion, "to speak thus, is to drive hope from our hearts. I came to administer to you, and will remain as long as I am useful, or you desire it."

"The daughter of your mother, Beatrice, as Jasper is her son," observed the colonel; "he has won my heart by eighteen years of unceasing obedience, diligence and kindness, in the three stages of infancy, boyhood, and that of man. But you, sweet child, who appear to me in your mother's grace and beauty, and with a heavenly promise to soothe the bed of death, have won it in a moment."

The doctor beckoned Jasper to step outside, and delivered into his hands a letter addressed to the colonel, and which had been delivered by flag of truce from the British. It was said to be a matter of life and death. Jasper reëntered with the letter, and remarking to his uncle:

"Here is a letter addressed to you, uncle. It comes from a prisoner in the enemy's hands, and is of importance."

"From one of my poor fellows, in the same strait as his colonel," said that officer; and then, addressing Beatrice, who was sitting by his couch, he said: "Read it, Beatrice; it will be an excuse to hear more of your sweet voice."

Beatrice opened the letter; but, when she saw that it was inscribed to "Jasper, the scout," she said: "It is for you, my brother," and, with a look of terror, she added: "and is signed, Randolph Beaumont. It is not possible that he is in British hands!"

Jasper raised the letter which Beatrice had let fall, perused it, and then exclaimed: "It is so. Uncle, the fatigue and excitement of the last few hours, are too severe for your weak state. Will you permit us to retire?"

"Nay, I insist upon it," said the doctor, who now entered

"My patient must have quiet, and I trust that he will **not** dispute the propriety of my edict."

"A few words with Jasper, and I yield," replied the colonel.

Jasper led his almost lifeless sister from the room. "Fear not, my Beatrice, I will answer for his safety. He is the victim of some villainy, which I will soon uncloak. But, I must away this instant, and you must promise me that, while I exert myself for Randolph's good, you will retire and take a few hours repose."

"I promise, my dear brother," said Beatrice, "and in your efforts for Randolph, think of your love for me."

Jasper pressed a kiss upon his sister's lips, and hastened to his uncle's room. He read the letter to the colonel, and explained to him all he knew of the affair.

"I must see Knowlton," he said, "and I must see Randolph's father. There is more danger than I have admitted to my sister. The feeling of the camp is hostile. They may have an immediate court-martial, and who can tell what may follow! I will be by your side, dear uncle, by the time you are refreshed from your exhaustion."

"God bless you, boy," replied the colonel, faintly; "you have no equal in works of mercy. Save Randolph if you can; he is a gallant soldier."

The first object of Jasper, was to see Randolph's father. He knew the obligation of Major Knowlton to Mr. Beaumont, and suspected that there was a deeper feeling between that honorable Briton and the fair Adeline. Thither he went, with all haste, and after preparing the father for some adverse intelligence, exhibited to him Randolph's letter. Alarmed and terrified at the jeopardy of his beloved son, he exclaimed:

"What can be done, Jasper? for I am so overcome with grief, that I am but little competent to guide."

"Major Knowlton must be seen. That I will undertake to do, and if I do not much mistake him, he will produce the officer that Randolph was to meet. But, we want this Blackwell, and, through him, we may obtain a knowledge of the means by which the British lines were entered. How can this be effected?"

"Possibly, by my faithful Carlos," said Mr. Beaumont, "He will risk his life to save his master's son."

Carlos was summoned. The sagacious negro soon comprehended their object, but was much affected at the position of Randolph.

Mr. Beaumont informed Adeline that he intended to depart immediately for the camp, but she would not consent to remain without him. She insisted that she would follow the fortunes of her brother, wherever they were cast. Mr. Beaumont could not resist the appeal of his daughter to accompany him, especially when the scout intimated that a lady of her own age, a niece of the colonel, was by her uncle's couch to soothe his dying moments.

The little group dispersed, Carlos upon the flying horse that he once supplied to Major Knowlton—Jasper toward the British lines—while Adeline and her father, with aching hearts, yet hopeful feelings, proceeded in the humble carriage of the day, toward the American lines.

CHAPTER XI.

IN THE LION'S JAWS.

JUSTICE is often perverted by the rapidity of punishment, and in a beleaguered city like Yorktown, where the Americans were defiantly in possession of the second parallel of its defenses, and an officer of its army had been arrested within the British lines, it was not unlikely that his trial, judgment, and execution would be the work of a few hours. A court-martial was assembled, and, as the evidence had been previously obtained, there was little doubt as to the result.

Randolph entered the court, pale, but resolute. His judges were impressed with his bearing. The evidence was entered upon without delay. The sergeant who had arrested Randolph attested that he was proceeding with his men to relieve guard, about ten at night, when he saw the figure of a man whose back was toward him. Before the challenge could be given, as if he had heard his footsteps, the prisoner there attempted to conceal himself behind some trees that were

near. In this act he was seized. The sentinels, upon being questioned, denied having seen or heard him, although they had preserved the utmost watchfulness. This was the brief evidence against Randolph, and when he was asked by the president if he was desirous of saying any thing in his defense, he narrated the circumstances of his conflict with the British officer, his arrangement for the trial, and his guidance to the British lines, adding :

“ The fellow by whom I was decoyed into your lines is one notorious Blackwell ; but his chivalrous colleague—he whom I was to meet—and who adopted this means to avoid a sword he dared not face—is still unknown to me, though he commands in your ranks. I have now only to ask that you will adjourn the court, at least for a few hours. The officer to whom I refer is known, I have reason to believe, to a person called, in the American army, ‘ Jasper, the scout.’ To him, by your courtesy, I have written under cover to Colonel Storm, the commanding officer of my regiment, urging him to use his efforts in my cause, and I am sure that he will do it.”

Randolph was removed, and half an hour later it was rumored that the court had agreed, and that the punishment was death. This decision was immediately forwarded to General Lord Cornwallis, and awaited his approval.

Jasper lost not a single moment. He was aware of a secret way by which he could enter the British camp, and once inside, he felt but little apprehension of being challenged. Toward this he rode with great rapidity, and making fast his horse, he was soon inside the defenses. He made his way to Major Knowlton’s quarters, and, after some delay, was admitted to a private audience. That the major was ready to serve his friend was quickly evident. After Jasper had related his story, the British officer said, decidedly :

“ You have done all you can in seeing me, worthy Jasper. You can not assist me in my future efforts. I feel assured that Randolph will be found guilty, and you and I know what would follow, and how quickly. But, I can save him. If too late for the court I shall not be for the general, and with my explanation I feel quite certain that I can set aside the finding of the court-martial. Go, therefore, to Adeline ; take her these few lines, and, concealing from her the imminence of

her brother's danger, tell her that I will set him free if in the power of man. If, however, I *should* fail with the general, in his present temper at defeat, and he should refuse either to repeal the sentence or to reassemble the court, counsel Adeline and her father not to despair, for, in defiance of the court and the commander, one so utterly guiltless shall *not* thus perish. Take this pass; the men are becoming noisy, and may question you. This will place you beyond suspicion."

The heart of Jasper was lightened. He felt confidence in the major, and believed that if Randolph's pardon could not be procured by open representation some other means would be made of avail.

"A few days more," said Jasper, when he had passed the British lines; "I perceive, by the weakness of those defenses and the power without, that we can advance and release Randolph ourselves." And he rode on with a haste that promised soon to bring him to his anxiously-waiting friends. Most unexpectedly he encountered Carlos on the way, that individual having fully accomplished his mission.

Jasper learned from the communication of the negro that this able diplomatist had discovered the villain Blackwell—had fraternized with him, and so won upon his confidence by strong liquor and good-fellowship, that he had extracted a full confession of the manner in which he induced Randolph to enter the British lines, by which it appeared that he had hidden in a hollow when Jasper separated the combatants, and heard the second meeting arranged; that he then formed the infamous resolution of enticing Randolph through the lines by prevailing upon a friend of his, who was that night sentinel, to affect sleep. When Randolph was thus safely entrapped, the scoundrel abandoned him, and he was arrested. This was not all, for, it occurring to the strategical Carlos that the best method of giving this fellow into the power of Major Knowlton would be to dispatch him to that officer on the plausible mission of letter-bearer—assuring the sordid rogue that the note contained such a development of the force, position, and weak points of the French and American forces as would enable the English to destroy the whole of them. Upon this information he affected to place inestimable value, and stipulated that he should receive one-half the reward.

Blackwell, rendered less shrewed by liquor, joyfully started upon the errand, and, what is worthy of being chronicled, he performed it, being the only task which he ever executed with faith.

"Why, Carlos," said Jasper, who could not help admiring the accomplished artfulness of the man; "I fear Major Knowlton will never read your writing. I was not aware that you were able to write."

"No re'd my writin', Massa Jasper," said the black, with much indignation at the surmise, "guess Miss Ad'lin' t'ach'd me, and if she know'd how, sure I knows how; we're both 'like that, I speck."

Jasper could only smile at the negro's novel philosophy.

CHAPTER XII.

OUT OF THE LION'S JAWS AND PAWS.

IN the room of an antique house in the beleaguered city of Yorktown, in the year 1781, strode to and fro, in hasty steps, a figure clad in the undress of a British general. His lips were firmly closed, his brow frowned in vexation, and he seemed like a chafed lion in the toils of the hunter, meditating upon escape. This was General Lord Cornwallis.

"Where is Rodney or Graves, that they permit the gates of the Chesapeake to be closed by this Count de Grasse, and who thus cuts off my only channel of retreat? Retreat!" he repeated; "that is unpalatable to a British general; but surrender is more bitter, and I trust I shall not be driven to *that*."

The door now opened and Major Knowlton entered.

"Ah, Knowlton," said the general, "is all arranged?"

"Every available boat is repairing to this side of the river, so that, if you so ordered it, embarkation can commence at midnight."

"That is well. We must now await the result of our next movement," said the general. "I have a few papers here upon the table awaiting my signature, and then you will

accompany me round the lines to cheer the gallant fellows. Evidence of court-martial," he then read, as he sat by the table, and, after perusing it, he remarked, aloud: "The defense is mere subterfuge. I approve the finding."

The eventful moment had arrived, and while the general held the pen that was to give life or death to Randolph, the major as succinctly as possible, confirmed those facts which seemed so improbable in the defense.

"Upon your statement, Knowlton," said the general, "the court-martial must reassemble, and that within the hour, for we have great matters to attend to."

The members of the court-martial were again summoned, and the major was on his way to his quarters in order that he might dress before he appeared before them, when he was accosted by an ill-looking, dissolute knave, who, at the same time, presented him with a letter, the delicacy of which was considerably tarnished by a residence in the bearer's pocket. He opened it, but in vain endeavored to decipher the hieroglyphics it contained, while those symbolical of the writer's name, and which were represented in the form of "KRLS" at the conclusion, were as mysterious as the rest. But, the major found a translator in the messenger, who stated, on being questioned, that he, Blackwell, was the agent of one Carlos, and then went on to relate the important information that the dispatch contained. The major soon perceived that the object of the cunning slave was to place this courier in his possession. He therefore thanked the messenger—said that he should be rewarded according to his merits, and that as in half an hour there would be a number of officers assembled on military business, he would introduce him to them, and no doubt his information would be received with much gratification. Then directing his orderly to supply Blackwell with refreshments, and to keep him very safely, he prepared to attend the court.

When Randolph heard that he was adjudged guilty, he prepared for a hasty death. He wrote to his beloved Beatrice, to his sister, and to his father, recommending them to each other's love, and he was about to direct his attention to still more vital duties, when he was informed that the court-martial had reassembled to hear further evidence, and he must attend.

He leaped from the table by which he sat, and with light and hopeful steps followed his guide. He entered the court. The same grave faces surrounded the same gloomy table, and there was another officer present, who stood apart from those who formed the court. He was tall, rather handsome, and young as himself, and there was an impression on Randolph's mind that he had seen him before. As soon as the object of the reassembling had been explained, Major Knowlton came forward and stated that he had read the evidence and the defense in the case now before the court; that he was the person who had encountered the prisoner and had received the challenge; but that he had never intended to respond to it; that he should have appeared before, but having crossed to Gloucester before the arrest was made known, he had not heard of the circumstance until after the verdict of the court was pronounced.

The president said that, although this evidence confirmed a *portion* of the prisoner's statement, it did not supply a motive for *entering* the British camp.

"That will be supplied by the evidence of one Blackwell, who is waiting outside," said the major.

"Then order him in," cried the president.

Blackwell entered, the very picture of a villain. The orderly had impressed upon this scoundrel that as the major was involved in this court-martial, it was necessary to clear him of all suspicion before he could introduce the important subject of his own dispatch, and Blackwell, though reluctant to set at liberty a person whom he hoped to have so adroitly trapped, resolved for once to tell the truth, and confess his complicity in the affair, and to acknowledge, at the same time, that the slumber of the sentinel was designed. When, therefore, this fellow's evidence was heard, all doubts vanished. Randolph was acquitted.

That evening, before darkness had ensued, the major conducted Randolph beyond the British lines. "Farewell, sir," said the major, "you are now in safety; but, had it not been for the princely Jasper, your fate might have been a fearful one."

"Farewell," said the captain, grasping his hand; "I recognize in Jasper a true friend, and in you an honorable foe."

The first desire of Randolph, upon gaining his liberty, was

to relieve the anxiety of his beloved father and sister ; yet he owed a higher duty to his country, for he perceived such preparations, as he hastily quitted the British camp, as betokened some species of attack. Cavalry and infantry were both in motion, and although the major endeavored to lead him from where those troops were numerous, and rode at a most rapid pace, he yet detected that they were marching to some rendezvous near the defenses. This he determined to communicate to head-quarters, and thither he directed his steps. He was courteously received, listened to with attention, and when dismissed, was instructed to wait at the quarters of his regiment for orders. He could but obey. Soon after he reached there a courier arrived with dispatches appointing him to the command of the regiment, and desiring him to hold himself in readiness for action, for that there was little doubt but that the enemy was preparing an attack by sortie. The joy of Randolph was immeasurable. After making every disposition, he resolved to ride over to the colonel's quarters—which he had learned were very near—in the desire both to inform him of his good fortune and in the hope of seeing Jasper and hearing of his family. He found that Jasper was absent, that there were no hopes of the colonel's recovery, and that he was engaged at that time with his niece. “A new character,” thought Randolph, “I was not aware that the colonel had such a relative. I will return. I will not intrude upon them.” At this juncture a lady entered the apartment that he was about to quit. He paused. The lady advanced, when, looking at him intently, she exclaimed :

“Randolph !”

“Beatrice !” he responded, and in an instant he held her in his arms.

“Safe, safe, Randolph !” exclaimed the agitated lady ; “Jasper promised this to me. I lived on the hope, and am not deceived.”

“To Jasper, the noble Jasper, I owe a double life,” said Randolph.

“But, dear Randolph,” said Beatrice, “you were not in greater danger than imprisonment.”

“I was in peril of my life, dear Beatrice ; death was suspended by a hair, and Jasper saved me.”

"Oh, my noble brother," exclaimed Beatrice, "in you I daily find some new quality to admire."

"Brother!" repeated Randolph, in astonishment. "Jasper your brother?"

Then Beatrice recounted the late developments, so romantic, so melancholy and distressing, and yet so gratifying; but, this pleasing colloquy was disturbed by the arrival of a messenger, who apprised him that certain manifestations in the direction of the enemy required his immediate presence.

As he hastened to his quarters there seemed no disturbance in the camp. The watch-fires were burning brightly, and numerous idle soldiers were grouped around them; but, in the deep shadows, where the eye of the British could not penetrate, thousands of unflinching men awaited the pending danger. When he reached his quarters he addressed a few inspiring words to his men, and then marched them to the rendezvous. They did not reach their position too early, for it soon became evident that the young captain—now colonel—was correct in his surmises at the commotion in the British camp. It was late when the English, in considerable force, dashed forth from their defenses, hoping to inflict such a sudden punishment upon their besiegers as to lessen the value of their former successes. The night was dark and stormy, and this was favorable to the assaulting party, as their approach was more likely to be unheard; but, there were eyes that pierced through the darkness, and ears that the storm could not deafen to their coming; so that, when they dashed forth they were received with a derisive cheer that staggered those bold troops before a gun was fired.

"Maintain your brilliant name, my men," exclaimed Colonel Beaumont, as they went into action; "and remember that, although I this day command you, your old colonel still lives to hear your fame. Let him acknowledge you in his dying moments as the same gallant men whom he has so often led."

The men scarcely needed this reminder. With dauntless courage they rushed upon the foe, who finally broke and fled. But the flying column was quickly rallied by the powerful efforts of a voice that Randolph recognized even in the battle-field; but a second time the Britons were routed, and now dead to all orders of their commander, rushed to the protection of

their defenses. The other columns of the enemy were not more successful, though less desperately repulsed, and were compelled to retire hastily within their defenses. Thus the forlorn-hope struggle of Cornwallis ended in defeat, and as he saw his discomfited army return in dismay he rode moodily to his quarters to put in force that one other resource still remaining to him.

CHAPTER XIII.

A FAMILY DENOUEMENT.

VERY soon after Randolph had quitted the house to which the dying colonel had been removed, Jasper returned, accompanied by Adeline and her father. Beatrice, having some intimation of this possible arrival, called her brother aside, and made the happy announcement of Randolph's safe return. This welcome intelligence Jasper instantly communicated to Adeline and her father, who were deeply affected at the circumstance, and attributed his release to the efforts made in his behalf by Jasper. To relieve himself from this manifestation of gratitude, Jasper introduced Beatrice as his sister. Adeline, surprised at her exceeding beauty, seized her hand, and congratulated her upon the honor of being sister to such a brother, while Mr. Beaumont, in a state of immovable astonishment, exclaimed, without having heard her name pronounced :

“Beatrice !”

Beatrice marveled at this peculiar recognition by a gentleman whom she had not seen before, and Adeline, alarmed at his conduct, hastened to his side to soothe his sudden agitation. At this crisis Mr. Chalfont entered, and his eye first falling upon Mr. Beaumont, he started in amazement, and while compelled, by some powerful convulsive feeling, to seize upon a chair for his support, he exclaimed :

“Is it not Alfred ?”

Mr. Beaumont, whose eyes had been intent upon the face of Beatrice from the moment he uttered her name, now, hearing his name used by a strange voice, turned to ascertain from

whom it came, and perceiving Mr. Chalfont, he seemed to have discovered another cause of wonder, and exclaiming :

"It is Sidney — my dear brother," the brothers rushed into each other's arms.

The scene that followed was intensely affecting. The brothers, clinging together as if the one had found a jewel in the other, were utterly speechless from emotion, while the daughters, unable to repress the feelings of their loving hearts, were soon locked in a close embrace; and Jasper, no less agitated at this astonishing incident than his valued relations, endeavored to sustain a composure that dwelt not in his heart. After a time the brothers sat down, side by side, and Beatrice and Adeline seated themselves as closely upon the couch, while Jasper retired to the bedside of his dear uncle to communicate this pathetic event to him.

"While I was in Europe, Sidney," said Mr. Beaumont, in the course of a brief explanation into which they mutually entered, "I received letters from my wife's uncle to repair immediately to Virginia, as he was extremely ill. We lost no time in obeying this summons, and he died a week after our arrival, leaving to me his property on condition that I changed my name to Beaumont. As soon as possible I wrote to you at New York; but you were then gone, and I was left without a brother. But where is little Charley? He passed away as one dead, yet I can not think him so."

"Little Charley is become renowned under another name," replied the brother, "that of Colonel Storm."

"Miracle upon miracle! I am lost in amazement. But, alas, do I not hear that he is fatally wounded?"

"I fear so, Alfred," replied Sidney.

"I must see him, Sidney," said Alfred; "I must see this dear boy. Where is he?"

"Jasper, I have no doubt, anticipated your anxiety," replied Sidney, "as he does almost every thing else, and has gone to prepare his uncle for the interview."

"He is, indeed, a noble fellow," replied Alfred. "He is the harbinger of good wherever he goes. Where is Jasper?"

"I am here, my uncle," said Jasper, entering the room. "I come from your brother, who is impatient for your presence."

Alfred soon entered the apartment, and, after a time, Sidney followed, and that evening was sacred to the three brothers.

The next morning the colonel was pronounced to be fast failing. Randolph had returned early to hear this sad news, and the family had assembled around the colonel's pillow. At this awful moment, intelligence was brought that Cornwallis had yielded to the threat of an assault. He had collected all the boats upon the river, with the intention of conveying his army across to Gloucester; but the storm of the previous night, that accompanied his sortie, dispersed his boats and rendered this desperate refuge abortive. He therefore yielded to Washington, to avoid the alternative of a general assault. This concluding glory of the campaign was delicately intimated to the colonel.

"Thank God that he has granted me the mercy of life until this hour," said the colonel; "I quit this world with gratitude to God for the great good accomplished. Jasper, take my hand, for thou art deepest in my heart. Beatrice, thou lovely vision of thy saintly mother, you must support the other. Dear Sidney—Alfred—Jas—" and thus the hero sunk from life to death.

All were deeply agitated at this impressive scene. Brother grasped the hand of brother, and cousin that of cousin, and their deep sorrow was perceptible in tears.

Sidney and Alfred could not endure separation, nor could Beatrice and Adeline, so all repaired to the residence of Alfred, and on a somber portion of whose extensive grounds, where the cypress flourished and the magnolia emitted its sweetest fragrance, the mausoleum of "Little Charley" was erected. Before Randolph returned to his regiment, his father disclosed to him the position of Adeline in reference to the British major. Randolph loved his sister, although it was perceptible that he rather disapproved the nationality of the suitor; but, on parting from her, he said:

"You do not ask me to be as generous to the major as he was to me, Adeline; but, be assured that I will exert every effort in his behalf;" but the crafty Randolph concealed from his blushing sister that *he* had been influenced by a fair sorceress, whose witchery could not be withstood. Beatrice had fathomed the unspoken despondency of Adeline, and deter-

mined, if possible, to remove the cause. Randolph found no difficulty in obtaining the major's release upon parole, when he informed the gallant Briton that he had been instructed by his father to put in a detainer against him, and thus carried him in triumph to his parent's residence. Poor Adeline was in ecstasies, and when she, with many demonstrations of affection, thanked her brother for having thus generously procured Reginald's liberty, he humorously replied that he hoped he had not introduced him to a severer bondage.

When marriage was spoken of by Randolph and Reginald, the fathers objected not a word. It was a subject for their children's hearts. The hidden treasure was brought from the forest, and the uncles and Jasper insisted that the whole amount, large as it was, should be equally settled on the ladies, for the brothers had no need of greater riches, and Jasper inherited an ample fortune from his uncle.

The faithful Carlos enjoyed the happiness which he had assisted in promoting; but still refused his freedom. Major Knowlton preserved the letter of Carlos, which led to Blackwell's detection. This manuscript became a literary document of value. It was often called for by the friends of the major, and had not its author lived to render a free translation, nine-tenths of its contents might have remained as long in obscurity as the inscriptions upon the pyramids of Egypt; but, by the black's assistance, a key was compiled, and these unique documents, classed under letter C, and endorsed with the distinguishing title of "The Carlos Papers," still remain in the archives of the Knowlton family.

THE END.

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